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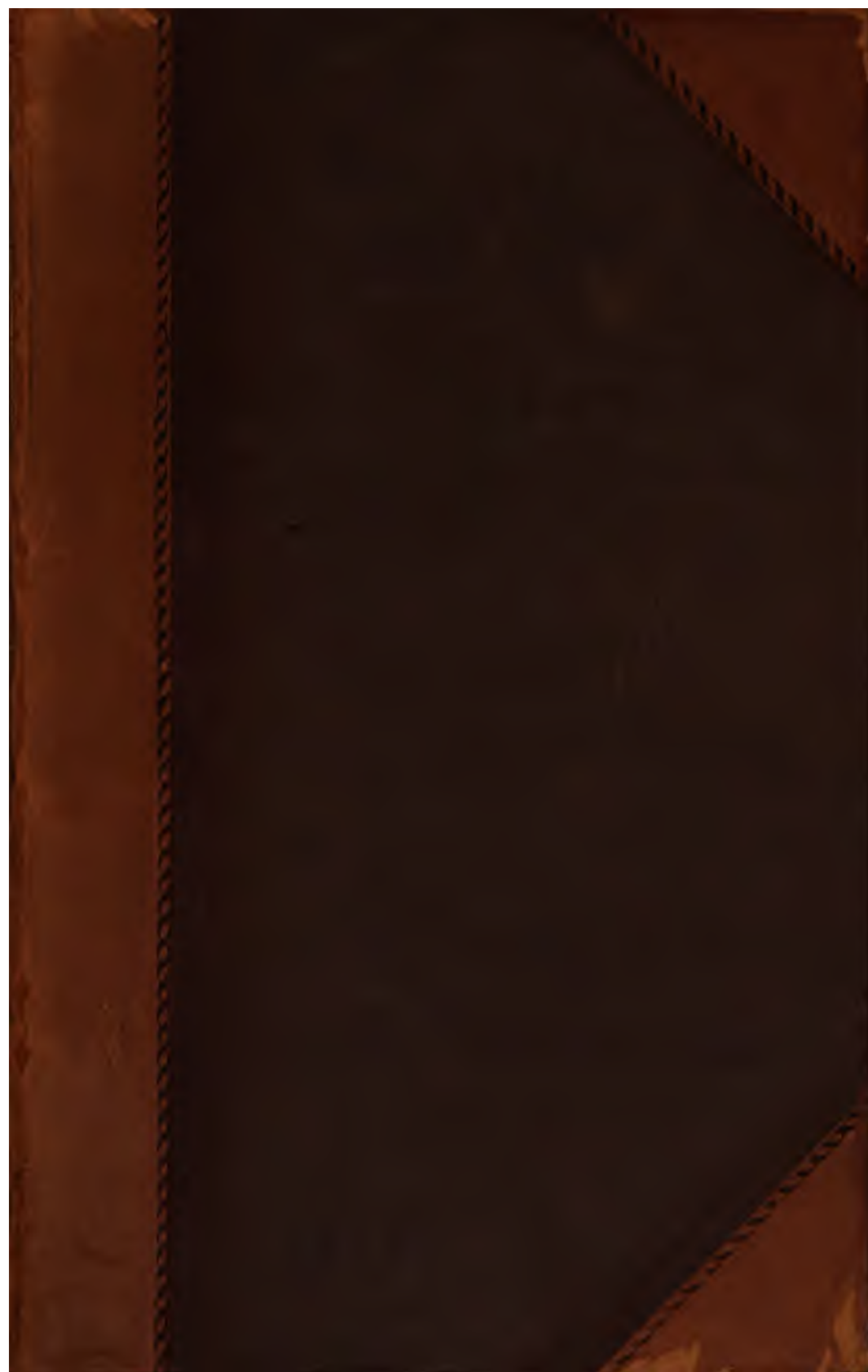
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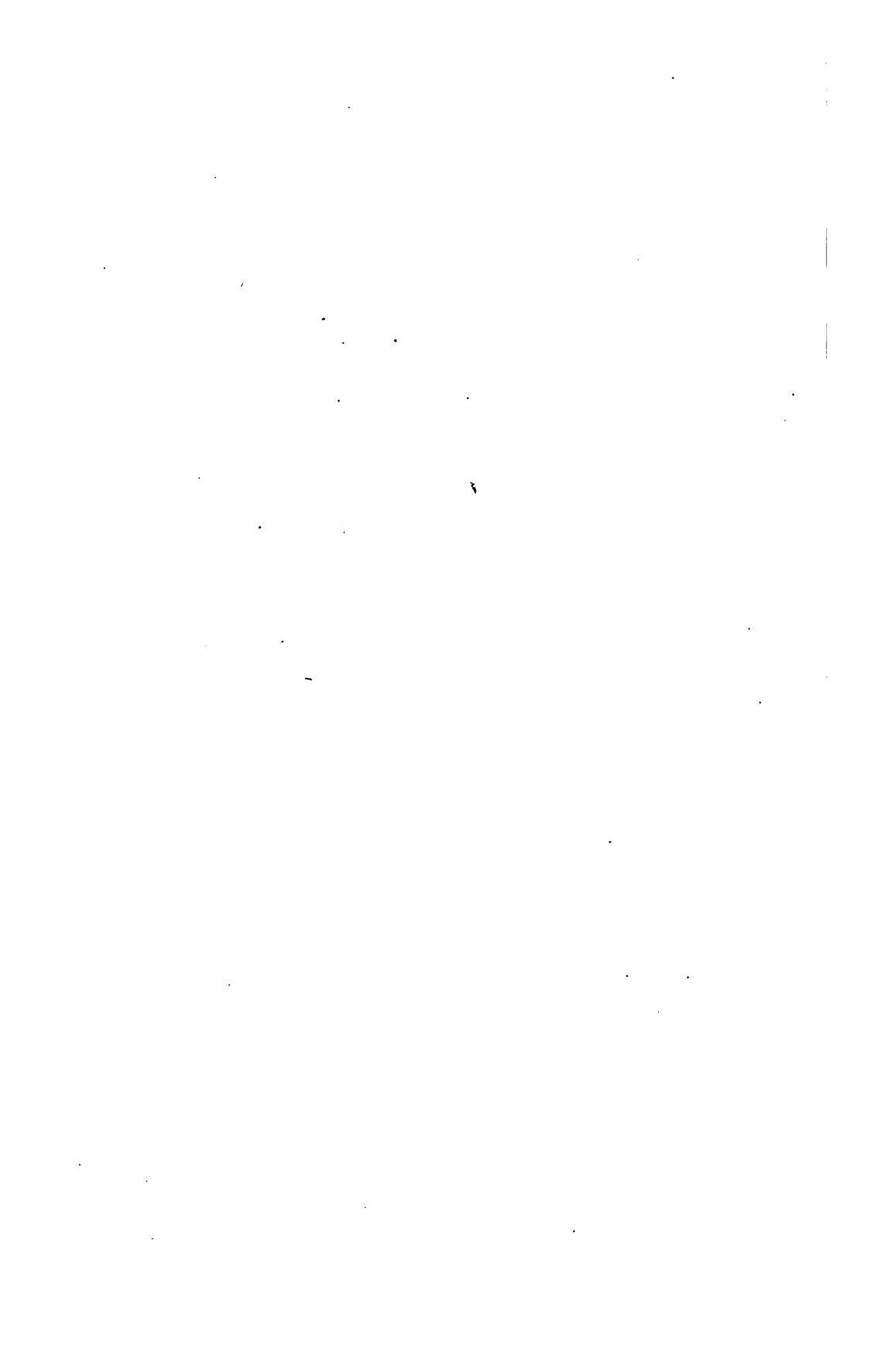
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ANGIOLINA 'DEL' ALBANO;

OR,

TRUTH AND TREACHERY.



ANGIOLINA DEL' ALBANO;

OR,

TRUTH AND TREACHERY.

A Play,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

THE LADY E. STUART WORTLEY.

LONDON:

HOW AND PARSONS, 132 FLEET STREET.

M.DCCC.XLI.

1112.

LONDON
PRINTED BY MOYES AND BARCLAY, CASTLE STREET,
LEICESTER SQUARE.



TO THE
COUNTESS OF CHESTERFIELD,

This Play is Inscribed

BY

HER AFFECTIONATE COUSIN,

THE AUTHORESS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

THE DUKE.
HIPPOLITO COLONNA.
COUNT GIULIO DI CASTAGNOLA.
COUNT DEL' ALBANO.
AZZO DURAZZO.
EMMANUEL LORIO.
LUIGI.
GUISCARDO, *a Servant*.
PIETRO, *a Servant*.
HYACINTH, *a Page*.
SERVANTS, &c.

WOMEN.

ANGIOLINA DEL' ALBANO.
IMELDA.
LEONORA, *Waiting-woman to ANGIOLINA, Wife to*
GUISCARDO.

SCENE.—MANTUA AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.



ANGIOLINA DEL' ALBANO;

OR,

TRUTH AND TREACHERY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A ROAD NEAR MANTUA, MANTUA SEEN
IN THE DISTANCE.

Enter HIPPOLITO and GIULIO.

HIPPOLITO.

I AM indebted to thee, sir, beyond
All power of mine to pay—past all expression;
To save a stranger's life thou hast risked thine own,
Indeed, most gallantly, and hast enhanced
With gracefulness of deprecation still,
Of this my weak and wordy gratitude,
The solemn service thou 'st so nobly done me;
I pray thee let my brave deliverer's name
Be known to me, for my best prayers and blessings.

B

GIULIO.

You have exaggerated much my service :
 A simple duty I but thus perform'd,
 Which, leaving unperform'd, had left me less—
 Aye, than immortal soul or mortal man !—
 A duty—nay, an impulse— I obeyed ;—
 Such preservation of a perill'd life
 Seems but a natural instinct.

HIPPOLITO.

Of our own !

Self-preservation is, indeed, the rule ;
 But thus delivering others, at *self-risk*,
 Is ever the exception.

GIULIO.

I would fain

Not think 't is so. But, pray you, now resolve me :
 What seem'd the villains' object in the attack ?

HIPPOLITO.

Fair sir ! my question yet remains unanswer'd ;
 Give me to know thine honour'd name—beseech thee !

GIULIO.

Giulio di Castagnola is the name
 Of one who is *thy* debtor made to-day,
 For that which Providence empower'd his doing,
 Which Providence accomplish'd in *his* person,
 The which he richly is rewarded for
 By hints of self-congratulating conscience !—
 I pray thee, tell me what the miscreants sought—
 Thy life or gold, or both ?

HIPPOLITO.

Strange seems it!—neither;

At least, I deem so now, on after thoughts.
Until my fierce resistance drove them on
To strive to slay me, or, at least, disable,
The seizure of my person sought they merely,
When first they intercepted me, and threaten'd,
If I may judge by words that 'scaped their chief,
As by the tenour of their acts throughout.

GIULIO.

Most strange, in sooth! And do you none suspect
Of urging on these freebooters? Themselves
Would hardly think of being satisfied
With but your person's custody;—indeed,
A strange incumbrance such must prove, methinks,
To these, in their wild life of stealth and peril.
This must be malice of some private foe—
Some hidden hater's vile revenge!

HIPPOLITO.

I doubt it!

At least, I none have reason to suspect;
Though, well you say, 't is difficult to guess
What motives can have prompted to such act
These desperate robbers! Sir, I grieve to say,
'T is here I leave my generous, brave preserver;
Business of grave importance calls me forward,—
Though grave, yet pleasurable too, and welcome.
Not far from hence there stands an hostelrie,
Where I may yet replace my slaughter'd horse:

Yourself, I think you said, had ordered steeds
To meet you near this spot ?

GIULIO.

Nay ! I had despatched
Mine forward with my servant, being bent
On feasting on this glowing morning's charms
At lingering leisure, independently ;
This the pedestrian can most fully do :
And I look forward to my farther walk
As one might to a banquet !—'Tis one, too,—
Since, oh ! how doubly dear to those who long
Have bent in study over musty tomes —
I' the schoolman's cell, held back from thy great world,—
Are all thy treasures—all thy lights and *lives*,—
School of the soul for ever !—glorious Nature !—
Forgive me, sir ! th' enthusiastic sense
I have of all the beauty that surrounds me,
And quick imagination I possess,
Have led me on to talk like what I am —
A very dreamer !—Ere we part, I pray,
Suffer me know my new friend's name ; thyself
Did'st claim as much from me !—Yet would I *more*—
Learn, too, the place of thine abode in Mantua,
That this acquaintance, though commenced in truth
Unpleasantly enough, be well continued !—

HIPPOLITO.

Hippolito Colonna, men do call me ;
Your deepest debtor, sworn unto your service—
Your true vowed beadsman, and your friend henceforward !

For mine abode in Mantua, 't is hard by
The Ducal Palace, at the right-hand corner
I' the main street, where, pr'ythee, haste to see me !

GIULIO.

Best thanks, Colonna, for thy frank replies.
Heaven speed thee in the business thou hast embark'd in !
To-morrow I will pass thy friendly threshold.

HIPPOLITO.

Preserve for me, till then, thy kind esteem !

[*Exit* HIPPOLITO.]

GIULIO.

Two years have roll'd away through all the changes
Of their most sweet successiveness of seasons,
Of their most beautiful informality ;—
Two years have roll'd by on their golden axis—
Since I in native, blessed Mantua stood !
Let loose, my heart, the flood-gates of thy hope—
Thy mighty hope, and thine exceeding joy !—
In suffocated stealthiness these stirr'd
Before my bound existence thrillingly !
Now openly,—exultantly—to the air—
The circumambient air—the o'er-hanging heavens—
The plains—the woods—thus let me give thy name,
Oh, Angiolina !—lovely and beloved ! [A pause.]

'T is strange how hope hath grown on me in absence !
I heard she was unwedded still—unpromised ;
And that her noble sire hath oft express'd
His earnest, ardent, and most heartfelt wish,
His daughter should espouse his friend's sole son,—

His long-tried friend—my father; then I feel,
Though she but coldly entertain'd my homage,
And little gave of dear encouragement,
Before, unto my love and true devotion;
Yet I am now another man, advanced
To something like celebrity, indeed,
Through learning grafted on the gifts of Nature,
(At least, if I may trust my much-loved tutors—
The old, grave professors who have stored my mind
With princely knowledge!) For the ungainly boy,
Blushing and bowed in gaunt shamefacedness,
The accomplish'd scholar now shall hail her presence,
Outpouring at her feet far rarer treasures
Than e'er the monarchs of the East possess'd,
And making passion beautiful and sacred,
With Eloquence, and Thought, and Dream, and Song!—
Oh, happy morning! of auspicious beauty!
Methinks, thy golden skies above me seem
To thrill with some unknown festivities!—
As all were jubilant and glad, like me
Partaking of my plenitude of bliss.
The earth seems breathless in an ecstasy,—
The angels of Love and Hope have made my heart-strings
Chords of a mighty, though invisible, Harp;
And they do play on these prevailingly,
Till all is the echo of their fine enchantment.
Thy voice, O lark! seems such!—that triumph'st now
With innocent ostentation of delight!
So high-fantastically, passionate-bravely!—
Glad bird;—thy clear quick notes, thy notes of transport

Shall die away ; but these heart-numbers still
Shall make sweet noise through all the eternity ;
Though the uncommemorative air forget
All other triumphs she hath teem'd with proudly
Of dear, delicious music—yet, would—would
’T were night—the regal, soul-exalting night,
That I might throne my thoughts among the stars,—
Heaven’s blessed stars ! whose lore my spirit loves,—
The unspiritual Messiahs of the mind !—
Such—Stars ! ye seem !—that shine to bring for man
Salvation still of the Intellect !—howe’er
In the infinite of ignorance benighted,
Still ye recall all truths, redeem all thoughts,
From clouding error in the end sublimely.
Yes ! Mediators o’ the Heav’n-rai’d Mind !—Ye seem !—
As One—the living Star is of the Spirit !—
So through all ages of the world it *hath been*,
So through all ages of the world it *will be* !
Kings of bright knowledge—Lords of the understanding—
Great captains of the Intelligency’s Powers—
The dread Creator hath for ever set
His presence-shadow in your eloquent aspects,
Ye ever-burning Sinais for the sense —
Proud worlds on fire with glory !—

[*A pause.*

Who advances ?

My boyhood’s playmate, and my youth’s companion,—
My cousin, young Emmanuel ?

[*Enter EMMANUEL.*

Well be met,

Most dear Emmanuel !

EMMANUEL.

Welcome back to Mantua !

I just encounter'd Pietro in the street—
Remember'd well his worthy, honest face—
Heard of your near approach, and sped me here.

GIULIO.

All thanks for such kind speed ! But how, my friend,
What means that cloud unwonted on thy brow ?
I do remember me, 't was ever clear
As cloudless summer—or the stainless chrystal.

EMMANUEL.

I fear that I have tidings that may cast
An answering gloom o'er *thine*, in deeper shadow :
Yet do I hope thy boyhood's phantasy
With mellowing manhood may have disappear'd,
And now given place——

GIULIO.

Torment me not ! Alas !

My soaring heart hath sunk below the seas—
A thousand fluttering fears distress it sore ;
Where played the wings of Hope, Fear's weights instead
Hang heavily, and drag it darkly down !—
Aye ! crushing weights instead of conquering wings
That made the sky their own ! Speak out !

EMMANUEL.

Thus, then ;

First say, rememberest thou fair Angiolina ?

GIULIO.

Do I remember to exist—to breathe—
To see—to utter speech—to move—sleep—wake ?

Do I remember life—thought—sense—soul—self?
Proceed! and mock me not with *such* a question!

EMMANUEL.

She is about to wed a certain youth——

GIULIO.

Hold! Do not pour destruction on my soul
With such rapidity of readiness—
Such hurrying torrents of heart-whirling terror!
Dole out the anguish in less liberal portions:
I tell that I *cannot* bear it,—no!
I cannot bear it—*will* not! I will hence—
Dash myself at her feet—pray—groan for mercy
As some poor wretch outstretch'd, with quiv'ring limbs,
Between the creaking winches of the rack!

EMMANUEL.

Be not unmann'd!——

GIULIO.

Yes—yes! 't is better thus!

Why should I grapple with the un pitying grief
That must be conqueror? Better, like a child,
To yield at once an unresisting prey!
For He who blesseth little children, yet
Beholding the instant-humbled heart, may pity—
May bless—that helplessness of suffering then!
'T is best, I tell thee—yes, Emmanuel, best—
To be a child where man may nothing do,
But strive, in still more hideous helplessness,
Against the power—the paramount power of pain!
What were griefs sent for but to change us so,

From men—proud rebels, even to trembling children?
I did rebuke thee for thy hasty tidings,
Now could I chide that thou'st left aught unsaid!
Rain down the wretchedness in drowning torrents!
Aye! drowning, blinding, whelming torrents, thick
On this yet too-uplifted head!—To whom?
Oh! guess my meaning and prevent my thought!

EMMANUEL.

To young Hippolito Colonna.

GIULIO (*starting*).

No!

Say not that name again! 'Tis not so! No!

EMMANUEL.

Indeed, but 'tis! sore 'gainst her father's wish.

GIULIO.

Annihilation! Must I bear *this*, too?
Oh! never wretch, weigh'd down with thousand crimes,
E'er felt such torture of a vain remorse
As *I* at memory of a deed of good!

EMMANUEL.

Thou speak'st in riddles.

GIULIO.

Let my tongue expound them,
Though, cleaving to my mouth's clamm'd roof, it hangs
A very icicle! Heavens!—pity me!
This morn, from a ferocious band of brigands
Hippolito Colonna's life I saved!

EMMANUEL.

What! didst thou so? But let thy conscience soothe thee.

GIULIO.

Let my heart crush me! Oh! that any hand
Save *mine* had brought deliverance for my foe,—
He—the everlasting foe of all my peace!
His business! ha!—the business that I bade
Heaven speed him in!—Hell speed him rather! yea,
And give him half my pangs to die with now,—
Or *all* to live with—if he *dares* live!—

EMMANUEL.

Cease!

Thou ravest,—recall thy better judgments to thee.
Colonna knew not of thy heart's devotion—
Hath not supplanted thee advisedly—
Is yet unconscious—

GIULIO.

True, if aught is true,
Now *she* is false: no, no!—not so!—*she is not!*
She never loved me! I have dream'd,—and dream'd,—
Until I did believe in mine own wish—
Made mine own hope Reality—Religion!—
Leave me, Emmanuel!

EMMANUEL.

Not in thy despair.

GIULIO.

Ev'n, therefore, leave me! Friendship can do nought:
Nought sympathy—nor counsel—reason—truth—
While the first transport of such anguish lasts,
'Tis solitude alone can medicine us!—
There seems a boundary in another's soul
(That is not made thus infinite with suffering)

Which chafes our own, and maddens it the more :
That, once removed, great Solitude consoles !—
The Immense of agony seems flowing off
Into the Illimitable, round us spread ;
The Immeasurable receives it from our hands,—
To the unimaginable worlds it travels,
And all its unimaginable self
Doth mix with them and half relieves our souls,
O' the horrible burthen ! 'Tis in such an hour
All Nature's oracles become, at once,
Our counsellors and comforters.

EMMANUEL.

I go !

Some two hours hence I will again be with thee.

[*Exit* EMMANUEL.]

GIULIO.

Now, miserable heart ! cold house of death !
Heart !— Heart ! that I did somehow proudly charge
To ope the flood-gates of thy mighty joy !
I bid thee ope the flood-gates of thy pain,
And revel in the deluge of despair !
This love was more than life within my life !
And now 't is death, more dreadful than all deaths !
Oh ! madness of its Memory !— Memory, spare me !—
Erewhile thou didst present unto my soul
Th' image of Angiolina, smiling mercy,
And looking love upon me ;— each sweet feature
Clearly glass'd back in thy adorable mirror.
Then wert thou like the sun enlightening all—
Enlightening fairest worlds of endless beauty.

Now, Memory, thou dost change thy favour sternly ;—
The cold moon, show'ring down on colder ice
Thy strengthless beams, thou seem'st—while thus thou pour'st
Thy scarce-illuminating looks adown
Upon my petrified and silenced soul !
'T is all a moveless madness now ! Nought stirs—
Within—without, is silence and obstruction.
Life is struck blacker far than death at once !
Nought stirs within my spirit ! Thoughts are Deaths !—
Feelings, so many Deaths ! And yet, as though
His agonies—the worst—with them thus bearing,—
(His battle-agonies ere yet he is conqueror)
They still are conscious of a giant anguish !
Into their graves they bear this consciousness !—
Their graves?—the earth's grave ! Creation seems one charnel !
Once its great life and inexhaustible
Was throbbing in its heat—and at its height
Through these, the electrically-kindling veins !—
Home ! I must hence !—must seek my Mantuan home.
But Oh ! henceforward ! what a house of heart,
That habitation of all human kind !
Wherein their comforts, as their counsels live,
Their every day and every hour companions,
Their secrets, and their treasures, and their tortures,
Crown'd exultations, sovereign miseries, too—
The unreck'd of, mysteries, and the unstoried victories !
Mine is an universe of agonies,—
Whose scatter'd worlds wear all one night of shadow,
Whose atoms all seem immortalities ! [Exit GIULIO.

SCENE II.—A CHAMBER IN THE DUCAL PALACE.

Enter the DUKE and AZZO DURAZZO.

DUKE.

Art sure Hippolito is safe?

AZZO.

Most sure.

A traveller arm'd, who chanced to pass that way,
Burst on the astonish'd brigands gallantly,
With intrepidity so frank and noble,
They deem'd that he was seconded and follow'd;
And, taking fright and flight, their quarry left
At large—'t is now the gaping city's talk!

DUKE.

Beshrew them for't, and him who played such part:
Who was't, I pray?

AZZO.

I understand that 't was
The young Count Giulio—Castagnola's heir;—
Th' old Castagnola, whom your highness may
Remember as Albano's dearest friend.

DUKE.

I do so.

AZZO.

He is now return'd to Mantua:
I mean the youth; the father having been
Long gather'd to *his* fathers: it should seem
The boy has travell'd far—his guardians willing

To give consent unto his own strong wish—
And studied much at famous universities.
He is of age now, and returns——

DUKE.

Would Heaven
He never had return'd to thwart my plans——
Would he were buried under all the books
That sages ever writ to suckle fools on!
So Angiolina—Angiolina's *lost*!

AZZO.

Indeed, not so! My liege, I have a plan!——

DUKE.

Out with it!—pause not!—quick!—possess me of it!

AZZO.

'T is this, my liege :—to win Hippolito——

DUKE.

To *win* him!—How? with poison or with poniards?
To win him!—crush him!

AZZO.

Nay, this plan is good!

To *win* Hippolito, to help your wishes,
And to persuade him to resign her?

DUKE.

Pshaw!

No hope of that.

AZZO.

Good hope, great Duke!

DUKE.

And how?—

No, Azzo!—no!—it is impossible!
Were she less lovely—less transcendant, then——

AZZO.

Highness! but hear me!

DUKE.

What! resign her!—Her!—

The paragon of beings! Her!—the unrivall'd—

The prodigy of beauty! Add to this

(Which he, perchance, might ponder), heiress, too,

Of lands and wealth—of birth, blood, station!—No!

AZZO.

Still say I, yes, my liege; I *know* the *man*—

Know a more servile spirit doth not live.

Permit me, Prince, to enter thus at once

On close negotiations.

DUKE.

No! 't were madness

No!—No!—it cannot be!

AZZO.

But let me try it:

I vouch for full success! He much desires

A place, I know, about your Ducal Court;

Also a title,—for the wealth he yields,

In yielding up his fair and plighted bride,

That can your Highness well make good to him!—

And bribe, besides, with a sufficient sum—

What hast thou wrung these Jews for—what despoil'd ——

DUKE (*impatiently interrupting*).True, true; well, be it so—it *shall* be tried!

AZZO.

He shall himself become the strong abettor

Of all your purposes; but speak the word,

And I at once will seek him out, and probe him.
Nay, never blench ; — *be sure I know the man !*

DUKE.

Go, Azzo ! and success go with you. — Stay !
Were it not better I myself should speak
With young Colonna — tell him my designs —
Ask as a personal favour, — which to grant
Shall be the making of his fortunes —

AZZO.

Yea !

'T would be a step that trebly would ensure
The fortunate end which we desire. But say,
When once the lady is to thee resign'd,
How, gracious Duke, wilt thou dispose of her ?
Marriage, of course, is thought not of, — her father
Will ne'er consent that she should quit his roof,
Nor would admit of aught dishonourable
While she remains beneath it ; — there are still
Most rugged difficulties t' overcome,
Ev'n with Hippolito's consent and countenance.

DUKE.

These shall be cared for ! I have scarce resolved —
One thing seems clear — the old man must be removed.
He shall to Rome — or stay — to Venice ; *there*
I have good friends to whom I can commend him.

AZZO.

It promises right well ; the lady then —

DUKE.

The lady then shall be mine own ! Luck help me ! —
And cunning, and all powers of treachery, guide me ! —

AZZO.

Thou must bestow her in some guarded place ;
Since she is of those who hold unto their honour,
As chiefs to heroism, or saints to heaven.
Then must thou let her think the slanderous world
Already deems that honour forfeited,—
Then must thou let her know Colonna's falsehood,—
Then must thou soothe her with all tenderest vows,
Make her believe her father gave consent
Unto the step your Highness thus had taken,
And seized the occasion offer'd him of going
To sea-throned Venice, to absent himself,
And leave the field more open for your purpose,—
That purpose being the abduction of his daughter.

DUKE.

Thy plan is worthy of thee, worthiest Azzo !
Title !—aye ! let him choose one—ought, save mine ;
And *that*, I would share with him for her sake.
Wealth !—give my treasury for that priceless gem.
Place !—bid him choose ; or make one that shall please him :
High-steward, comptroller, chamberlain, or treasurer,—
Or altogether, should he will it so.
Let these be his, so Angiolina's mine !
About it ! hence ! good Azzo !—Seek the youth !
Convey to him at once my strict commands,
That he should here attend me in the palace.
Thou may'st, with caution, sound him ere he comes—
Prepare him for mine overtures and offers—
Dress up too the infamy in flourish'd words—
Call it by names to gild it to his sense,

As high, disinterested, chivalrous friendship—
Proud self-denial—loyalty the loftiest—
And great, uncalculating generosity!

AZZO.

Fear not, my prince, but I will do my best!

DUKE.

Be speedy, for the time seems leaden-paced.

[*Exit* AZZO.]

Never was prince so excellently served
As I am by this wily Wickedness!
For villanousness, he is worth his weight in gold!
Sweet Angiolina! thou art mine own—mine—*mine!*

[*Exit* DUKE.]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN COUNT DEL' ALBANO'S HOUSE.

Enter ANGIOLINA followed by COUNT DEL' ALBANO.

ALBANO.

YET more, my daughter, I have more to say :
Thou 'st wrung consent from me by tears and prayers
To this ill-omen'd union.

ANGIOLINA.

Father, hush !

Oh ! do not speak 'gainst my Hippolito !
'Tis true he is not rich, nor boasts great weight
Among the rich and powerful of our land :
But he is Wealth, Power, Honour, State, and Fame,
And Sway, and Sovereignty itself to me !—

ALBANO.

Alas, my child ! I fear me he is one
Too poor in principle—too light in love.
Ev'n at the eleventh hour, I bid thee pause—
Thy happiness, thy peace, are now at stake !

ANGIOLINA.

Could happiness and peace of mine be e'er
Divided from my heart's Hippolito,
Dear father, trust me, I would yield them smiling,
And take Hippolito with grief, shame, pain,
And penury, exile, slavery—death instead !

ALBANO.

But yester morning there arrived in Mantua
The noble youth whose father was my friend,—
My earliest, faithfullest, most-honour'd friend,
Di Castagnola ; and to see this youth—
The high-born Giulio—husband of my child,
Has ever been my heart's most favourite wish.

ANGIOLINA.

Nay, dearest father !—What ! that solemn sage !
That star-gazer—that book-worm—that pale dreamer !
His high Philosophership, as I was wont
To call him some two little years ago !—

ALBANO.

And I am told, for learning and attainments
His match is not in Mantua ; more than that,
Not in all Italy—withal right gallant——

ANGIOLINA.

Nay, father ; see him on a horse and die—
Unless he is much improved in that—indeed,
He might well kill us all with laughing ! Ah !
To see him ——

ALBANO.

I *have* seen him on his horse :

Whate'er he *was*, he's an equestrian now
That well might challenge any here or elsewhere.

ANGIOLINA.

Not my Colonna! Oh! my father, cease!
My word—my plight are given—I must be his!
Strive not to change me—it were vain—how vain!
My heart, my soul are his! Strive not to change me!
Behold these wedding presents he hath sent!
What need to send them, when he hath already
Given me the treasures worth an empire's sway—
His heart—his truth?—Oh! saints, I am too happy!
I see another world about me, smiling—
Another heaven—another earth!—Not so!
All Heaven 't is now!—but that—even *that*—is made
A more magnificent and wond'rous vision!—
I am too happy!

ALBANO.

May this cloudless mood
But *last*—firm fix'd on good and true foundations—
And I will answer thee like any echo!
Since nought can move thee—since thy choice is made
Beyond recall, I will concede to him
Permission straight to make due preparations—
Rather, to finish those he *hath* commenced—
And, at his earnest instance, I will name
To-morrow for the sacred ceremonial.

ANGIOLINA.

To-morrow! Ah! too soon! One day remove it!
Just twelve hours later, and I yield consent!

ALBANO.

Nay, blushing self-deceiver! nay, sweet doubter!
I better know thy heart than thou may'st do;—
To-morrow is the day: while yet postponed,
Those nuptials—little dear to me I own—
Weigh on my mind with an unwelcome weight:
A thousand agitations shake my soul.

ANGIOLINA (*aside*).

A thousand now, through *mine* seem thrilling fast!
Thou'rt going, dearest father? Oh! return—
Full soon return, if this indeed must be
The last loved day that I shall pass with thee!

[*Exit Count.*

Hippolito!—my love—my lord—my husband!
What hath delay'd thee? Oh! why com'st thou not?

(*Looking at a watch.*)

Just eight-and-forty hours—three minutes over,
Seven seconds and a half—(which thou, my heart,
Reckonest by ages, and by years, and months)
Hast thou been sever'd from thy true one's side!
What fools Love makes of us!—But *what* a Folly!
Angels might envy it, and hate their wisdom,—
Aye, the deep-knowing Cherubim!—New joy!—

[*Enter IMELDA.*

Most sweet Imelda! thou art come now to hear
The tidings of my gladness. Know, my father
Hath given the fullest, final, best consent,—
And I shall be Colonna's bride to-morrow!
But thou—thou'rt pale and downcast! Oh! what is't?

IMELDA.

Read thou these papers, wherewith thy Colonna
Hath charged me for thy private hand.

ANGIOLINA.

Give here !

My fond heart trembles ——

IMELDA.

Nay ! be reassured, —

The peril's past.

ANGIOLINA.

The peril ! Oh ! great heavens !

Though *past*, the shadow of such peril past
To *him* more frights me than the present substance
Of thousand perils to myself ! (*Reads.*) “ Preserved
From dangers imminent by Giulio !” How ! —
By Giulio ? — Yes : be blessings shower'd upon him ! —
“ Brigands assaulted me ; — but all is well ; ” —
Sweet Heaven, be thank'd for this amazing mercy !
Think ! had I known the peril he was in,
What agonising trance of tribulation —
What spasm of sick suspense, had crush'd me down,
Almost unto the death which he escaped ! —
Almost ? — ah ! surely *quite* ! and he had come
Only to find a corpse, and not a bride ! —
But, what ! my friend ! thou'rt pale and downcast still !
Foul shame on me, forgetful of the cause,
Which woman's skill discover'd — as thou know'st,
And which thou hast owned to me some time ago,

Look up, and sigh not thus. Say, dear Imelda,
Doth the Duke's coldness still the same continue?

IMELDA.

No! not the same—increasing evermore!
Alas! I reckon not how I have offended!

ANGIOLINA.

I fear me 't is his changeful nature——

IMELDA.

Changeful?

What! knowest thou——

ANGIOLINA.

Nothing! but I oft have heard

He is capricious in his loves and likings,—
By nature an Inconstant. Yet have hope;
He never can have loved one half as worthy,
As beautiful, as good, pure, dear, as thou art!

IMELDA.

Hush, flatterer! Tell me, didst thou ne'er remark
The Duke upon *thyself* intensely gazing?

ANGIOLINA.

On me?—Oh, no! On *me*?—Nay, I remember,
At Prince Martini's fête, some foolish words,
Exaggerated compliments, and praises,
That meant just nothing—were received as such;—
But never have I marked him gazing on me.

IMELDA.

Because thine eyes but look for young Colonna.

ANGIOLINA.

Nay! this is yellow Jealousy's delirium!
Be jealous, sweet, of all the world but me.

He cannot love me, who would *hate* his love ;
 He cannot love me, who so loves his loved one—
 His once best-loved one,—that to change from *her*
 Should seem to me like changing from myself!

IMELDA.

Tried friend and gentlest! honey'd consolations
 Sit on thy lips, and flow from thy soft voice :
 I will not give the rein unto my fears ;
 I will be patient—patient?—what is that?—
 But still to wait on hope, and watch for peace!
 A moment now to change the theme! My friend,
 Remember'st thou how Castagnola loved thee,
 How thou wert wont to flout him, and to mock him?—

ANGIOLINA.

(Change not the theme to *him*! And yet—Ungrateful!
 (Not for his love—I feel not *there* beholden!)
 I ought to think on him with deepest joy—
 He saved the life of my Hippolito!
 For which I yet will thank him! Let me send
 Forthwith, with invitation strong to him
 (Couch'd in the kindest and most friendly terms),
 To greet me here—My waiting-maid—Leonora!—

IMELDA.

Nay! if he loves thee still——

ANGIOLINA.

Oh! never think it;

'T was all a dream—a fancy!—steep'd in study,
 He hath had but little time to think of love—
 Love! most unnatural to his frame of mind :
 is luminous mistresses above,

The shining stars, preserve his shielded heart
From any vulgarer, less exalted passion!

IMELDA.

Poor Giulio!—Well! I know not——

ANGIOLINA.

If thou 'lt pity,

Pity another—one whom *thou* makest wretched—
Emmanuel Lorio. Never credit me,
But he doth love thee to distraction!

IMELDA.

Yes!

He loves me—he hath told me so; but hope
Grew not with love;—he *knows* I love another!

ANGIOLINA.

Poor youth! I pity him——

IMELDA.

Keep, Angiolina,

All *thy* compassion for the Castagnola!

ANGIOLINA.

Methinks he needs it not.—But I forget,
I have to send a gracious letter to him,
Nor will delay this duty farther.—What!

Who waits?—Why!—Leonora! [Enter LEONORA.

LEONORA.

Here, sweet lady!

ANGIOLINA.

Thou must be bearer of a scroll for me,
Or find a trusty messenger to be so.

LEONORA.

That can I easily;—my husband, lady——

ANGIOLINA.

Aye! I remember'd not that thou wert married.

LEONORA.

One year, three quarters, seven weeks, and a day.

Mantua ne'er saw such tender turtle-doves

As I and my Guiscardo! *Such* a husband!

I trust your ladyship's may but be like him!

ANGIOLINA.

Like *him*!—Oh, mercy!—My Hippolito!

LEONORA.

Yes, madam, ev'n like *him*—my fair Guiscardo!

ANGIOLINA.

Thy fair Guiscardo!—Oh, ye gods! hear that!

His freckled skin is like a rusty sword.

His eyes have met in mortal combat, sure,

And, cowards, are flying from each other!

LEONORA.

True,

His vision *is* oblique; but then those eyes—

One like a fix'd star—like a comet the other—

All freely ranging——

ANGIOLINA.

Well, enough! enough!—

Call him thy fair Guiscardo if thou wilt,

But never let his name be seen or heard

Within an hundred leagues of my Colonna's!

Come with me, kind Imelda; we will sit

In mine own chamber, at our tapestry frames,

(Since I, dear idler, have got one for thee!)

And still beguile the time with sweet discourse. —
But first a line to Giulio must I pen.

[*Exit ANGIOLINA and IMELDA.*

LEONORA.

How she disparaged my Guiscardo! — Well!
He *has* some faults, and *that* I let him know.
But I must call him, that he may remain
In readiness to take this same despatch.
Guiscardo! — here! — my sweet Guiscardo! — haste!

[*GUISCARDO enters.*

Indeed, my angel! you're too tedious-slow:
Would you had wings — you creep like any tortoise!

GUISCARDO.

Nay, Leonora, I made speed —

LEONORA.

There! — hear him!

Plain Leonora! — not one fondling word!

GUISCARDO (*aside*).

'T is plain Leonora, or I am not Guiscardo! —
Would I could make her pretty with such fondling!

LEONORA.

No tender epithets of blest endearment?
Surely you must forget! — we have but been wedded
One year, three quarters, seven weeks, and a day.
I look upon myself as still a bride,
And thou, love, as my gallant groom!

GUISCARDO.

Thy groom!

I' faith, thou treat'st me like one; or yet worse —
Send here and there —

LEONORA.

Now, hearken to me, pray,
Mine only love ! Oh ! I could hate you soundly !
I beg, when you address yourself to me,
You still would add some epithet delightful, —
My life ! — my bird of beauty ! — or —

GUISCARDO.

Enough !
I ne'er shall get by heart a longer string.
My bird of beauty ! (I must say, Leonora,
You've flown away with your own beauty — heigh ?
Or else some other bird hath, surely !)

LEONORA.

How !
Thou wretch ! — I mean, thou cruel, villanous darling ! —
Ugh ! — I could scratch your eyes out, my delight —
My Dove ! — Oh ! I could pull your bushy beard
Up by its roots, until you roar'd again !
I scorn those vile insinuations, dearest !
But see, now, how thou hast flutter'd me and fever'd ;
[Sobbing.]

I know at last thou 'lt be my death ! — my life !

GUISCARDO.

Nay, never ruffle so thy farthingale,
My bird of beauty ! — spare thy farthingale,
Thy scarlet wedding farthingale, fire-new.

LEONORA.

Fire-new, indeed ! — A year old and three-quarters ! —
Add seven weeks, — one whole day ! — fire-new, indeed !
'T is time you gave your bride a new one, troth !

GUISCARDO.

Well! but 'tis either new, or thou no bride—
An old, staid, sober, wedded wife——

LEONORA.

Shame!—shame!

How dar'st thou thus abuse me, impious man!

GUISCARDO.

Abuse, indeed!—Now listen—once for all,
I cannot spare one doit to thee at present;
So ask no more for farthingales nor mantles!

LEONORA.

Thou need'st not roar me like a lion—lamb!—
Oh! thou'rt the greatest torment—my delight!
Thou say'st this all to spite me; well, I know
Thou must have mints of monies in thy purse;
Or else, if thou'rt, indeed, so pauper-poor,
My only treasure, thou'rt a shameful spendthrift;
For I well know thy monthly wages——

GUISCARDO.

Come,

Now, I will strike a bargain with thee straight.
I will bestow on thee a piece of lace—
A venerable piece—to make a coif;
It were more seemly thou should'st wear one, too;
'T was my old grandmother's—saints rest her soul!

LEONORA.

The foul fiend fly off with your lace and you—
My bird of Paradise! D'ye think, in sooth,
That I—a youthful, blushing, tender bride—

Would wear your old dead grandmother's cast clothes,
 You avaricious, parsimonious—pet !
 You need not look so sour upon me—sweet !
 Nor scowl so savagely—I'll be revenged,
 I do assure thee ; my adored one, truly—
 Thou art far too despicable to be borne with !
 Old lace indeed !—a coif forsooth !—how paltry !—
 Thou 'rt rough and rude, uncourtly, most unpolish'd,
 My Polar Star—my Planet—my Great Bear !—
 Now pay me monies here, my charmer, down,
 Wherewith I may, as it beseems me, buy
 A sky-blue farthingale, which I much need,—
 Two jackets of a rose-tinged Padusoy,—
 Slash'd sleeves of purple, and a grass-green mantle,
 Trimm'd round with fringes red, and knots of yellow ;
 Three tuckers of the very richest lace,
 (Not your dead grandmother's old spider webs,
 Pluck'd from her cottage corners, I'll be sworn !)
 Now do be kind, my precious !—do consent,
 Light of my eyes !—my Love !—my Lucifer !—

GUISCARDO.

I'll give thee leave to throttle me, or flay me,
 If e'er thou'lt get such presents out of me !
 Come, be not chafed, my bird of beauty, pr'ythee !
 Nor cast such ugly looks at thy Guiscardo ! [Going.

LEONORA.

Was ever such a man ? Stay ! stop ! be still !
 Is not my lady waiting all this while,
 For thee, Guiscardo, my devoted —

GUISCARDO.

What!

My lady waiting! why, thou chattering goose——

LEONORA.

A goose! thou barbarous, monstrous—blessed treasure!

GUISCARDO,

Well, 't is a bird! you *will* be call'd a bird!

Why didst not tell me I was waited for?

LEONORA.

Because thou wert not; I in sooth forgot,

'T is thou art waiting for my lady here;

And when she hath prepared a certain scroll,

'T is thou must bear it to its destination;

Though well I guess thou 'lt take two hours about it,

Since thou 'rt a most incorrigible sloth,

My Hercules—my Heliogabalus!

Hist! hark! she calls! one word, Guiscardo, love!

Say, thou wilt give seven dollars?

GUISCARDO.

Not a doit!

LEONORA.

Why! you old Jew—that is, I mean you jewel!—

Oh! be more kind! *three* dollars?

GUISCARDO.

Not a rap!

LEONORA.

My angel! why, the devil take thee then! [*Exeunt both.*

SCENE II.—ANOTHER ROOM IN COUNT DEL' ALBANO'S HOUSE.

ALBANO alone.

ALBANO.

I tremble for my child!—I doubt Colonna :
Yet he hath, doubtless, some fair qualities,—
A reckless bravery, and a hardihood
Of soul and bearing!—Ah! I fear, of *heart*!—
A restless, shining, climbing, bold ambition,
A passionate ardour and a flaming zeal
In *whatsœ'er* he undertakes or fancies,—
At least, it seems so in his outward 'haviour!
But much I fear!—Away! I will not further
On this dissatisfying subject dwell!
How could I bear to watch my daughter drooping—
Her young health undermined day after day—
To see those eyes for ever swollen with weeping—
That cheek more pallid and more hollow grow—
My rose of beauty fading to a lily—
My lily withering to a bloomless stalk—
To hear the wisest leeches in all Mantua,
The best Mediciners from Rome and elsewhere,
Pronounce her dying of a broken heart!
Could I insist, and dig my darling's grave?
Death hath no hope! but life still yields some promise,
Howe'er may cloud its changed horizon o'er.

Fain would I think mine Angiolina's love
Must change whate'er is wrong and base in him,
And make Hippolito more like herself!
Oh! that she had but loved young Castagnola!
I do believe him all his father was—

Lo! he is here!

[Enter GIULIO.

Dear son of my dear friend!
All welcome back to Mantua! I could wish
We might have met on other terms; thou know'st
It ever was my dream, and hope, and aim,
That thou should'st wed my daughter!—Thou hast heard—

GIULIO.

I have, sir, and I have but this to ask,
That thou touch not upon that hopeless subject.

ALBANO.

And thou still lov'st her! Destiny perverse!

GIULIO.

Herself hath lately sent to me a letter,
Commanding here my presence; I obey'd,
Though well I guess why thus she grants me audience;
To pour out in mine ears her gratitude—
Her *gratitude*—that I,—that this right arm,
Deliver'd from a threatening mortal danger
The lover she adores! for whose dear sake,
She destines me to an eternal misery,
Her lover—bridegroom—husband—Oh! my rival—
The enemy of my crush'd soul for ever!
And I obey'd, and I am come—am here—
To see her yet once more! Once more?—Sweet Heaven!

When have I ceased to see her?—night and day—
Asleep, awake—in sorrow or in joy—
At peril or at peace—i' the lonely cell,
Slave of the midnight lamp of magic knowledge,
Or 'midst the hum of human companies ;
In glittering halls of state or populous streets—
In travel or at rest—in tempests—calm—
In idlesse, or 'midst occupation's movement—
Still have I seen her—seen nought else but her!
Oh! but my soul hath seen her evermore!

ALBANO.

Speak thou less wildly. Come, command thyself.

GIULIO.

She will command me, with her slightest word—
Her very look—her presence—her approach!
I could not pain her with *my* pain reveal'd—
My anguish bared unto her gentlest heart!
No! not to gain a treasure past all summing—
The heart-dear tribute of *her* pitying tears!

ALBANO.

Thou lovest her! would Colonna loved as well—
With such a holy fervency!

GIULIO.

What say'st thou?

Doth he not love her as the new-made mother
Her twelve-hours' child—the miser, all his store—
The monarch, all his sway—the warrior, conquest—
The exile, his native land—the enfranchised slave,
His late given liberty—the dying, life—

The sage, his theory—and the bard, his laurels !
Doth he not love her thus?—Aye, more—more—more,
Then let me hate him for his lack of love,
More than I did for all his love's presumption !

ALBANO.

Alas ! Colonna !—But, I go to seek her.

[*Exit* ALBANO.]

GIULIO.

Misery—strong misery !—make me all thine own ;
Deaden this over-love—this over-life !
And let me suffer less,—less suffering shew her—
'T is for her sake alone I wish it. Hark !
A sound ! Be crush'd to stillness—Heart !—a step !
O thunder !—such it seems unto my heart,
Though light as dove-plumes falling !

[*Enter* ANGIOLINA.]

ANGIOLINA.

Oh, my lord !

I hasten to express to thee how much,
How most profoundly, I am beholden to thee !
(*Aside.*) Heavens ! he is pale as death ! and trembling,
too !

Ah ! can it be, indeed, he loves me still ?—
No—no, 't is over-study hath thus changed him.
(*Aloud.*) Thy gallantry no guerdon can desire—
Such reminiscences are best rewards—
Themselves are best rewards to generous natures !
Yet, as brave cavaliers have ever deign'd
From lady's hands to take some token-boon,

And wear as badge of service or of merit,
 Accept, I pray, from Angiolina's hands —
 Grateful to thee for her dear lover's life —
 This poor remembrancer — her pictured self.

(Gives a picture.)

GIULIO.

Too much — too much —

ANGIOLINA.

A trifle — dear my lord! —

GIULIO.

Too much! Oh! agony — I cannot bear it!

(Falls on his knees.)

Start not! — thou know'st I have loved thee! To have
 loved thee

Must be to love thee ever! — let me speak!
 That start seem'd worse than outrage to my feelings —
 Enforce not pause! — I *must* be heard this once: —
 I love thee! Well I know it is in vain;
 But I have said those words! To speak those words
 Heaved all my soul up to the height of heaven,
 And seem'd to bind all — all life's blessedness —
 All blessedness of future and of past —
 All blessedness that e'er was felt on earth,
 Through all its myriad hosts of generations,
 In one full throb of deep heart-preciousness!
 Oh! I have loved thee while my labouring mind
 Climb'd the slow ladder of heaven-leading knowledge!
 While I have bent me o'er the starry lore —
 The old luminous Chaldean occupation —

And taught my thoughts their Titan-march to make,
My heart was up i' the heavens before them ;—yea !
My heart was in the heavens before them, lo !
By love uplifted o'er the visible sky !
Where hath that ruin'd heart of death now fall'n ?
Not—not—to break here at thy feet, 't were *bliss* !

ANGIOLINA.

Alas ! I pity—I regret——

GIULIO (*rising*).

No more !

Burst from my heart the impassion'd, madd'ning truth,
Ere I could check it, like a fount of fire !
Thou pitiest !—thou regrett'st !—*I* pray for pardon !—
No right have I to harrow thy young heart,
So dove-like gentle, with my desperate sorrows.
Farewell, sweet—sweetest lady !—ne'er think more
On him th' unhappiest ! Be the happiest thou,
Nor let another's pangs cast slightest shadow
O'er thy fair opening firmaments of joy ! [*Exit* GIULIO.]

ANGIOLINA.

I pity him ! and yet, the while I pity,
I feel half angry that he *dares* to love me,—
So jealous of myself I now am grown,
For my Hippolito's sweet sake adored,
Scarce can I bear another should presume
To look e'en on the consecrated temple,
Sacred and dedicate to him alone ! [*Exit* ANGIOLINA.]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN COUNT DEL' ALBANO'S HOUSE.

Enter ANGIOLINA and HIPPOLITO.

ANGIOLINA.

Said'st thou my father must so soon depart?

HIPPOLITO.

Aye, sweet! upon the instant: for which cause
Our marriage—heavy thought!—is now deferr'd.

ANGIOLINA.

But will he long remain in Venice?

HIPPOLITO.

Yes!

For much I fear, the business he embarks in
Will long detain him—longer than he dreams of.

ANGIOLINA.

Thou look'st much troubled.—Nay, Hippolito,
Resume thy own dear smiles and cheerfulness.
Thou goest not—we shall be together still—
Oft meet, and talk o'er all the times to come.
My father will return, thou know'st, and *then*——

HIPPOLITO (*aside*).

That know'st thou not!—nor I——

ANGIOLINA.

Why, rebel!—what!

Still lowering—muttering?—clenching, too, thy hands?

Is thy liege lady, then, so ill obeyed?

Did I command not smiles at once to appear?

And dar'st thou put me off with frowns instead?

HIPPOLITO.

If ever thou desir'st to see again

A smile upon this alter'd lip of mine,

Thou wilt consent to what I now propose.

ANGIOLINA.

Good angels, guard me! Dearest!—sole beloved!

Thy solemn looks, and voice, and gestures, chill me!

Say we must part, and freeze me into stone!—

Say we must part, and we *are* parted, then,—

Say we must part, and kill me with the word!

For could I live to hear thee say it twice!

HIPPOLITO.

Far different, Angiolina, is my project—

Far different is my prayer! What said'st thou?—part!

Part!—Who can part us? Who can e'er divide

Deep soul from soul—or self from self?—No, no!

Mine earnest and most passionate, fond request

Is, that this evening thou should'st deign to meet me—

Be made mine own by all the holiest bands—

Ev'n in thy father's absence, made my bride,

And give me all earth hath of dear and perfect!

ANGIOLINA.

Ev'n in my father's absence? Stay, Colonna!

Wherefore such haste?—I understand it not!

HIPOLITO.

To me 'tis matter, sweet! of life or death!
 Nay, lean on me—thou tremblest fearfully!
 By life or death, beloved! what *can* I mean,
 But losing thee or linking thee for ever—
 Hear'st thou?—for ever!—*ever*!—to my soul?

ANGIOLINA.

How can this be? Oh! speak thou not so darkly!
 Where is the threat'ning danger? Where the hind'rance?
 Hath not my father given most full consent?—
 Is not all fix'd——

HIPOLITO.

Yet, hear me, there are things

I must not yet reveal unto thine ear—
 Wherefore I must not—must be secret, too!
 But hast thou, Angiolina,—hast thou, then,
 So little confidence in him—thy choice—
 Thine own selected love, and lord affianced—
 As thus to shrink from him—mistrust him—question—
 Distract with doubts—suspicious ev'n, perchance!

ANGIOLINA.

The heavens forefend! Colonna, 't is not so;
 Whate'er the mystery, unto thee I trust—
 Trust all my happiness—myself—my future—
 As I would trust my very *soul* in dying—
 Aye! in the article and point of death—
 In thy dear hands, before it pass'd to Heaven!
 Which pardon me if I too wildly speak!
 Smit with the passion of love's deep remorse!—
 Where must I meet thee?

HIPPOLITO.

Near the Annunziata,
And at the *first* approach of twilight! Bless thee!
Now must I leave thee: nay, indeed, I must!
Must I not seek the holy man? Farewell!
Send'st thou a host of angels with my steps—
Thy precious thoughts?

ANGIOLINA.

My thoughts—my soul itself!

HIPPOLITO.

Nay, sweetest! it would bear me straight above!
While so much happiness of the earth awaits me,
Still would I be a sojourner below!— [*Exit HIPPOLITO.*]

ANGIOLINA.

My father! much I fear I am doing wrong!
Why did I start? Methought I heard a step—
Methought my father's! Wherefore did I start?
Guilt!—guilt! When shrunk I from his steps before?
Our very instincts tell us truths for ever!
Yes! I am doing wrong! I cannot doubt it—
I dare not doubt it—though I *will* not help it!
The conscience I have impiously expell'd
From forth my heart, seems speaking in my nerves—
My limbs—my pulses—through mine every vein—
(My blood still ruling as the moon the tides!)
Alas! Hippolito! must this then be?
Why did I not persuade *thee*, change—o'ercome thee?
Surely I had the *right* upon *my* side!
Surely the *wrong* was pleader on thy tongue!

Deceive my father ! — kindest — best of fathers !
It is a horrible and hateful thought !
But then to lose thee — lover, husband, life ! —
My soul — my self ! And darkly didst thou hint
At that last uttermost ruin and despair !
To lose thee from my hope, and hold, and heart, —
Ev'n at the very steps o' the sacred altar !
No — no ! I have not courage for the thought !
How then for worse — the accursed reality ?
'T was not my father's step ; and yet he goes
To-day — this hour he goes — he starts for Venice ;
Sped on a secret mission by the Duke.
And shall his daughter ask not for his blessing ?
The *last* — though he will know it not — the last
That he shall give her, ere she comes a bride
To claim it weeping at his honour'd knee ?

[*Exit* ANGIOLINA.]

SCENE II.—A STREET IN MANTUA, NEAR A CHAPEL.

Enter ANGIOLINA.

ANGIOLINA.

He is not come ! Oh ! I am faint with fear !
'T is a bye street, but should some passer-by
By chance walk through it, I should die with shame !

What! hiding here alone—at dusk!—bow'd down
With consciousness of wrong! Would he were come!
If soon he comes not, I will hence to home!—
If soon he comes not, I will haste—will fly!
The twilight's thickening, thickening round me fast,
I scarce can see to the end of this short street,
'T will soon be darkness! Cruel—dire suspense!
Cruel Hippolito! to leave me here,
Faint, shiv'ring with a host of hideous fears,—
An undistinguishable throng of thoughts,—
All terrible and torturing to my soul!
This danger that he threaten'd to our loves!
Can this have so detain'd him—can it be?
Ah! hath that threat'ning mine of secret danger
Exploded, making ruin of our hopes!
A step! it stops—another! Oh! 't is him!

[Enter the DUKE, with his mantle held up to his face.]

Thou'rt come at last, Hippolito—my husband!
Oh! I have shudder'd—quiver'd like an aspen!
How, in a moment, thy reassuring presence
Hath changed my terrors into confidence!
But speak to me, yet reassure me more,—
Thy voice shall gladden me with deeper trust!
Not speak to me, Hippolito?—Still silent?
And with thy face thus muffled? Oh! once more,
How the agonising dread thrills through my heart—
A thousand madd'ning doubts distract me! Speak,
Hippolito, or I shall die!—Have pity!
Dost hear me? Heaven! 't is *not* him!—*who* is 't?

DUKE (*shewing himself and kneeling*).

I !

ANGIOLINA.

Begone ! Ha ! treachery ! Help !—begone ! Oh ! mercy !

DUKE.

A lover worthier of such queenly charms—
Such startling wonders of unrivall'd beauty,
Here claims thee—worships thee with heart on fire !

ANGIOLINA.

Wretch ! for *thy* life, if not for *my* sake, fly !
Should my sworn lord and lover find thee here,
Despite thy royal station, ill sustain'd,
He will most surely slay thee at my feet !

DUKE.

Not as *thou* slayest me with those murdering frowns,
Ungentle lady ! What ! hast thou ne'er mark'd
The deep, entire devotion of my love ?
But these are maidenly hypocrisies,—
Thou *must* have seen that I for long have loved thee.

ANGIOLINA.

Loved *me* ! forgettest thou, then, Imelda ?

DUKE.

Yes !

And all but Angiolina on this earth !

ANGIOLINA.

How can I pause to parley, e'en a moment,
With such a shameless and presumptuous traitor ?
How dar'st thou come thus screen'd in night to insult me ?
Ha ! 't is a horrid light breaks on me now !—

The dangers my Hippolito foresaw,—

Foresaw and told me of—I see it all!

'T was *thou* he fear'd. The keen, quick eye of love

Had pierced the secret of that traitorous heart!

Yes, desolation of a new despair!

It was the Duke he fear'd—'t was therefore thus

He urged the abrupt, clandestine ceremonial!

(*To the DUKE.*)

Where hides Hippolito? How knew'st thou, wretch!

That here at vesper hours we were to meet?

Oh! thou'st waylaid him, seized, withdrawn him, murder'd!

One word—one word—say *but* that *still* he lives!

DUKE.

He lives, indeed, but not for *thee*, my fairest!

ANGIOLINA.

Then I will die for him! Unhand me, monster!

Yet fear his vengeance, be most sure 't will reach thee!

Hence!—leave my presence—touch me not—begone!

DUKE.

Hippolito is safe: but know, unkind one,

His safety may depend on thee,—thou'st heard!

ANGIOLINA.

Yes—I have heard! Oh! I will kneel to thee—

Implore thy pardon for thine own fierce outrage—

Stay like a statue—pale with supplication—

All breathless with the intenseness of my prayer—

Here at thy feet—here in the dust—here—here—

For ever! till thou say, "He is safe." Behold me!

(*Falls on her knees before him.*)

For him am I a meek petitioner
To one whom I would spurn wer't not for him!
Yet whom for him I should more wildly spurn—
Yet whom for him I feel *more* urged to spurn—
For him I scorn'd thee—for his sake forgive thee!—
Promise to guard thy secret—swear to thee
Thy traitorous conduct ne'er shall pass my lips!—

DUKE.

Traitorous?

ANGIOLINA.

Aye! traitorous! What! think'st thou, great Duke,
That none are traitors save they plot 'gainst princes?
What are the rebels 'gainst religion's edicts—
Against humanity and heaven at once,
Humanity's quick heart, and Heaven and Honour?
What—what art *thou*?—Ev'n at this very moment
Laying a snare for Innocency's feet,
I' the face of all the angels there above us!

DUKE.

Wilt thou be mine? This lengthen'd, vain resistance——

ANGIOLINA.

Resistance! Oh! let me yet have no cause—
Restore me to Hippolito!—think—think!
The holy man now waits to make us one,—
Dar'st thou dissever what already seems
Bound at the altar—a most sacred knot?
A curse will light upon thee! Back, I say!

DUKE.

Nay! shriek not for the sake of him thou lovest:

Thou must come hence with me, delay is vain—
If thou would'st save him !

ANGIOLINA.

No! I would not save him!—
To blush for me in bitterness of soul,
To live in loneliness of heart for ever—
In life-long, woful widowhood—in wretchedness—
Not deigning ev'n to mourn for what he loved ;
Yet with that soul a void—where *should* be mourning!—
If he must die—if such thy guilty purpose,
Be his great heart crush'd midst its happiness!
Oh! let it fall asleep amidst its joy,
And never wake to sorrow or to shame!

DUKE.

Obey me!—come!

ANGIOLINA.

No, never!

DUKE.

I will make thee!

ANGIOLINA.

Unmake me first! destroy me—kill me—tear me,
Live limb from limb, and nerve from nerve! Strike,
murderer!

Help! help! oh! help! [Enter Azzo DURAZZO.

Thou blessed man!—befriend me!—

Save me! oh! save me!

AZZO.

I will help thee, lady!—

(*She hurries towards him, he seizes hold of her.*)

Help thee to do the bidding of the Duke,—
Help to fulfil thy destiny and duty.

ANGIOLINA.

Off, miscreants ! Oh, Hippolito ! oh ! save me !

(She is carried off.)

SCENE III.—A ROOM IN COUNT DEL' ALBANO'S HOUSE.

Enter LEONORA.

LEONORA.

Why ! here be changes ! all, too, in an hour !
The marriage is deferr'd to time unknown—
My good old lord sent off in breathless haste
On some great state commission unto Venice—
And now, my youthful mistress hath departed,
Nor spoken word to me, nor human being :
I guess she is not gone a hundred miles
From her Colonna's garden, which, in truth,
Is pleasant with its orange-trees and myrtles
At this sweet season of the year !—Who cometh ?

[Enter IMELDA.

IMELDA.

Say, Leonora, can I speak awhile
With thy sweet lady ?—is she much engaged ?
I know these times of fluttering preparation—

LEONORA.

Faith! madam, I can ill resolve thy query :
She hath been out this hour at least.

IMELDA.

This hour?

She hath been out!—Thou 'rt dreaming, sure, Leonora!

LEONORA.

No, madam!—no, 't is true. Though as for dreams,
I *had* last night a most surprising one
About an owl upon four legs—an oyster——

IMELDA.

Also upon four legs?—Ne'er mind thy dream,
But tell me, is it sure that she is out—
The Lady Angiolina?

LEONORA.

Sure as fate,

Or any thing, yet surer—if aught is!
As true, as that the old Count is gone to Venice!
She is not in her study, nor her chamber,
Nor in her oratory,—nor at her toilet,
Nor on her balcony,—nor in the hall,
Nor in the great saloon,—nor in the small one,
Not in the music-room,—nor picture-gallery,
Nor in the corridore,—nor in the cellar,
Nor in the kitchen,—buttery;—offices——

IMELDA.

I pray thee hold thy peace! She must be out—
She must be gone to see her aged aunt!

LEONORA (*aside*).

(She must be gone to see her youthful lover :
The odds are large, but I have the best of it.)

IMELDA.

Know'st thou, Leonora, why the Count was sped
Thus suddenly and rapidly to Venice ?

LEONORA (*looking important*).

Why! I but heard scant hints—a solemn mission
Unto the Forty, as I do believe,
Relating to——

IMELDA.

To what ?

LEONORA.

To certain things,—

A lion's mouth that bit a man's hand off
Belonging to our Mantua.

IMELDA.

Pshaw! thou 'st heard

Of that famed lion's mouth wherein they place
Their accusations in the dark.

LEONORA.

Well, lady !

Whate'er they place there in the dark or light,
Be sure the lion would at once snap at them :
Besides this, I believe our gracious Duke
Has sent to beg that the Venetians would
Lend, in all kindness, for his Highness' pleasure,
To drive about in through fair Mantua's streets,
On some great day of jubilee ere long,
Their gilded, splendid, shining Bucentaur !

IMELDA.

Their Bucentaur! Why, Leonora! Well
I *might* say thou wert dreaming! 'Tis a *ship*!

LEONORA.

A ship! Oh, well! his Highness was in fault:
You see he must have thought it was a coach.
'Tis strange the great should be so ignorant!

IMELDA.

I give thee credit for thy subterfuge!

[*Enter* EMMANUEL LORIO.

EMMANUEL.

Art *thou* here, sweet Imelda? Little thought I,
When I did cross the threshold, what a light
Should dazzle all my soul within these walls.
Forgive me! I should speak not thus, I know!— [hold?
(*To* LEONORA.) Dost thou belong to Count Albano's house-

LEONORA.

Signor, I am first tirewoman and hand-maiden
To Angiolina Countess del' Albano.

IMMANUEL.

Hath the Count yet set out for Venice?

LEONORA.

Yea;

With th' arrow's speed he started hours ago.

EMMANUEL.

I am unfortunate: I had despatches
To send to Venice to my dear step-brother,
One of the youngest of the Conscript Fathers.

IMELDA.

Not of the tyrannous Forty, I should hope?

EMMANUEL.

Himself no tyrant, I can vouch for that.—
Oh, lady! grant me yet your ear awhile ;
I have learn'd things that I would fain impart
To thee in private.

IMELDA.

Unto whom relating?

EMMANUEL.

Unto the Lady Angiolina, (dear
To thee I know, Imelda, as thyself—
Thine own sweet self!) and to our Prince the Duke !

IMELDA.

Thou may'st retire, Leonora.

LEONORA (*aside, going*).

May I so?—

Another love-case, else mine eyes are pumpkins,
Or any thing but lovely grey-green diamonds !

[*Exit* LEONORA.]

IMELDA.

I pray thee, instantly, report thy tidings !

EMMANUEL.

I fear—and pause upon the threshold still
Of my disclosure, lest it give thee pain :
I know thy generous friendship's sympathy
In all that may concern Albano's daughter.

IMELDA.

Most true, for her I feel as for my sister ;
A childhood-friendship—deepen'd, day by day,
By constant intercourse, congenial feeling,
Pursuits the same, and sympathetic hearts !

EMMANUEL.

I fear a baleful eye is fixed on her!

IMELDA.

A baleful eye! (*Aside.* Be still, my dubious heart!)
What eye can harm *her* with its blighting looks?
Dwells fascination in its fixedness?

EMMANUEL.

Aye! fatal, fascinating flame is in it,—
Start not, nor look thus wilder'd and aghast!
I mean not to impugn her constancy,
Her virtue, her sincerity, or firmness;
But merely to express that what shines there
May prove the fascination of a fate,
'Through other helps and agents than her frailties,
Through other ministers than her weaknesses.
I fear me, that the Duke doth love her!

IMELDA (*wildly*).

Who?

EMMANUEL.

The Duke!

IMELDA.

I fear so too! I long have fear'd it!

EMMANUEL.

[what!

Great Heaven! thou 'rt pale—thou 'rt alter'd!—What! oh,
Imelda! what can I have said to cause it?
Dost *thou* then love the Duke? Is he my rival,—
My long-detested, dangerous, unknown rival?
Oh! I ne'er guess'd 't was thus! At least reply—
Make certain mine uncertain wretchedness:
Dost *thou*, then, love the Duke?

IMELDA.

As Life !

EMMANUEL.

Thou dost !—

Oh, happy Duke ! an emperor might be proud
To smile his state away from him for thee,
Ev'n for permission but to look and love thee !
And thou dost *love him* ? Happy—happiest prince !

IMELDA.

Happy ! he loves me not ! thou say'st thyself
He loves sweet Angiolina !

EMMANUEL.

I knew not

When *thus* I said, of his most blessed fortune ;
I was in ignorance of his great bliss !—
I knew not, lady, he was loved by *thee* !—
Certain,—I oft have seen him gazing deeply
Upon the shrinking charms of Angiolina :
'T was for her friend's sweet sake, I now doubt not !—
True, Giulio—who adores Albano's daughter—
Hath told me things late hinted unto him
By certain courtiers,—haunters of the palace.—
No ! nothing I believe, but that the Duke
Must love Imelda, if Imelda loves him !

IMELDA.

Alas ! I dream it not ! the illusion fades !
He once did love me, or he deem'd he did—
Then finding—well he might—himself perfection !
That I in nought could be his equal—nought !—

Unworthy of his princely thoughts and loves,
He changed, and sought another worthier—lovelier!

EMMANUEL.

That I deny! with all my soul deny it!
Such lives not in the universe!—'t is false!
The falsest word those gentlest lips ere spoke,
For Truth, anticipating thy sweet Thoughts
Lives on those lips that speak thy soul unspeaking!—
Lives on those lips to weave them into words,—
Till the air melt musical with truth around thee!—

IMELDA.

Weak flattery this! Oh, do not flatter me!
Praise were a bane and burthen to me now—
A bitterness, scarce—scarce—to be sustain'd,
In this my state of heart-humiliation,
Think, what must flattery be?—then flatter not!
Go to the bed of death and flatter there,
But never—never to the breaking heart!
It sees too clearly—Oh! it feels too deeply!
Illusion withereth from the world away,
And nought is left save stern reality!

EMMANUEL.

Let me proceed then, let me tell thee all:
It is supposed—mysteriously 't is whisper'd—
The brigands who attack'd Hippolito
(Returning from his country-house near Mantua,
Whither he had but sped the day before
To make some preparations and arrangements—
Some due preliminaries of his marriage,—
There meeting with his legal men of business;

It is suspected and supposed by some,
These brigands were the creatures of the Duke,
And acting by his secret orders thus.

IMELDA.

Oh, Heaven! What horrors! No! I cannot think it!
Changeful he may be, light and most capricious,
But never—never criminal! Oh, no!
I will not, and I cannot think it.—No!

EMMANUEL.

I *would* not think it; for to know the Duke
Beloved by thee Imelda!—makes him seem
As something sacred in mine eyes—but yet——

IMELDA.

Wherefore—oh! wherefore should he do such deed?
At least he knows—he *must* know Angiolina
Adores Hippolito, loves not himself,—
Would wed her lover's memory—sadly constant—
Should aught divide Colonna from her fortunes,
Nay, she hath ever frown'd upon the Duke,
Misliking what she term'd his loose, light manners!—

EMMANUEL.

Ah! but he may have plann'd some deep-laid scheme;—
Man cannot dream what Tyranny may purpose!—
What shriek is that? Hark! hurrying steps approach!

[Enter LEONORA.]

LEONORA.

Oh, madam! horror! Oh! the Count—my master!

IMELDA.

Good gracious Heaven! Why, what has happened?—say!

LEONORA.

He is brought home dead—cold—a stiff, pale corpse!—
Think—think how terrible! so late I had seen him.
Go forth in hale and green old age—and now
A livid corpse!

IMELDA.

And is it so in truth?

Indeed, most terrible!—The cause—the cause—
The means—the manner of his death?—

LEONORA.

’T was thus:—

He left the city mounted on a steed
Sent by the gracious Duke, and meant to ride
Some few leagues forward on this noble beast,
The Duke’s own favourite charger, full of fire—
Alas! too fiery far, and too impetuous;
In brief, the Count lost all command of him;
He gallop’d off at a most headlong rate,
And (as reports one, who was of the event
A shock’d spectator), darting suddenly
Round some sharp angle in the road, he threw
His venerable rider to the ground
With force terrific, fracturing thus his skull—
Alack the day! behold the sad procession—
(*The body is brought in by servants, &c.*)

GUISCARDO.

Alas! my master! generous, noble-hearted,
Kind patron! friend and father! art thou gone?
Woe, woe to all thy house, thy friends, and kin!
For never worthier heart did throb and beat

In warmer bosom ! cold that breast is now !

IMELDA.

The unhappy Angiolina ! So beloved !
The darling of his age—his cherish'd child !
How my heart bleeds for *her* !

LEONORA.

And well it may !

How will she bear, when she returns, to hear
The tidings of her sudden, dread bereavement ?

EMMANUEL.

Lady Imelda, let me lead thee hence,
Thy nerves, already shatter'd, ill can bear
Th' accumulation thus of grief on grief ;
Let Leonora and the other menials
Keep silence on this terrible event
Till the Count's kin may be by me apprised.

IMELDA.

I go, but do not fail, my good Leonora,
T' acquaint me with my hapless friend's return ;
Soon as she reaches her late happy home,
I must be with her to console and soothe her.

LEONORA.

I will not fail, believe me, oh, signora !
'Twill be a bitter trial for her heart !
Her kind old father ! doating on her so,
Wrapp'd up in her, devoted to her wishes,
For ever watching all her looks and words !
A mournful day ! a heavy, weary hour !

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—ANOTHER ROOM IN COUNT DEL' ALBANO'S HOUSE.

Enter LEONORA.

LEONORA.

The marriage ceremonials were postponed
To make sad room for the offices of death !
Well ! the first shock I have recover'd from,
But scarcely yet can smile, and laugh, and trip,
As I was ever wont to do before,
Like some gay fairy o'er a moonlit green !
Death is an awful and a mighty thing—
I feel his presence now through all the house ;
It hangs o'ershadowingly where'er I move ;
I start at mine own steps !—O saints ! a sound !
Once more ! a crack ! a creak ! a rustle !—Mercy !
Spirit perturbed !—rest !—rest !—Madonna guard me !—

[Enter GUISCARDO.

Why is it, thou ?—thou stupid, creeping—cherub !
Why dost thou come so stealthily and softly
To make my heart freeze over with its fears ?
Thou art the worst protector—my best love !

GUISCARDO.

To say the truth — adorable Leonora ! —
Myself am rather shaken now and troubled :
Death is a gloomy guest in any house,
But such a change as this, from *fêtes* and galas,
The light of promise and the flush of joy,
The life of merriment, the soul of gladness,
Unto the terrors of the funeral darkness,
Th' o'erwhelming horrors of the house of death !
It is too much for me—too much for man !

LEONORA.

Thou'rt surely not afraid ?

GUISCARDO.

Afraid ! why—no !

Perhaps not just exactly, but I feel
No sort of inclination to remain
Too near the chamber where the Count deceased
Is laid in state amid black flowing draperies—
Tall candelabra, banners, plumes, escutcheons !—
When 't is my turn to watch beside the corpse,
I know not what will happen to me !

LEONORA.

Nay !

Thou surely never can have felt a fear !
My doughty darling ! my chivalrous chuck !
I will not think it—in thy strong right arm
I trusted, Oh, thou hero of my heart !
My Priam of old Troy ! my Nebuchadnezzar !—
My Alexander and Bucephalus !—
My man-Minerva and my wooden horse !

GUISCARDO (*muttering*).

An thou hadst cried—"thy wooden ass!"—'t were
likelier :

A plague of these fine flourish'd words, say I !

LEONORA.

I ever thought thee earth's most lion-hearted !

A very dragon in all valour's virtue !

And so thou art, too, though thou know'st it not !

GUISCARDO.

I think I *am* sufficiently courageous :

Yes, something of a lion—doubt it not !

Our Lady shield us !—Heard'st thou that dread noise ?

LEONORA.

Dread noise!—help!—save me!—there again!—Oh,
shame !

Look, look, Guiscardo—'t is a little mouse !

There, running by the wainscotting—

GUISCARDO.

Ahem !

The echo that it woke though, roll'd like thunder !

LEONORA.

Very like thunder !—I thought so myself !

You need not write yourself a coward for that !—

'T is an extraordinary fact, Guiscardo,

That mice sometimes (in certain circumstances)

Will make a noise as loud as tumbling mountains !—

GUISCARDO.

Strange ! most extraordinary—'t is, indeed !—

LEONORA.

Once I was crossing the old stone corridore—

GUISCARDO.

Well! mind not now your memories of past mice!—
Your tail'd and snouted reminiscences.
I'll tell thee what, I fear we are two old fools!

LEONORA.

Indeed, beloved Guiscardo, you're past bearing,
A very false, and foul, and worthless—treasure!—
Most insupportably uncivil thus
To interrupt me!—I could gladly break
That thick calf's head of yours! What! not cast down?
You brazen-faced, unblushing, heathenish—Idol!—

GUISCARDO.

Wilt hear me speak? Why, sweet! I know by heart
Thy long-drawn histories—think'st thou I forget
What once thou tell'st me?—never!

LEONORA.

That shows better!

Still, sweet Guiscardo, thou hast but little grace
When thou dost tenderly address thy love;
Thou still forget'st to place the attesting hand—
(I cull'd those fine words from a sweet romance)
Upon thy heart—as thus: stop! lower—no, higher,—
More to the north—a trifle more to the eastward!—

GUISCARDO.

Leave fooling, Leonora!

LEONORA.

What, sir! fooling?

Incorrigible that thou art, what mean'st thou?
Thou 'st the most ordinary understanding,

Most commonplace and every-day dull nature,
My Phoenix! of all men that walk the earth,
I grieve to say it, but the truth is truth,—

GUISCARDO.

At least it used to be so in my youth!—
Thou never saidst a truer thing than *that* :
But askest thou yet no tidings of thy lady?

LEONORA.

My dear, sweet mistress! have they sent to seek her?
Be quick and speak, you dolt!—I mean you dovekin!—

GUISCARDO.

Aye, but they cannot find her!

LEONORA.

How! 't is strange!

GUISCARDO.

They cannot find her, and the general thought
Is that she must have gone with her betrothed,
Since he, too, hath not once been seen abroad
Since she was missing.

LEONORA.

Nay! unlikely that:

What probability,—when all was smooth,
All plain, and settled for her marriage?—

GUISCARDO.

True!

And yet the impatience of a hot-brain'd lover
Might shrink from waiting for that age—a week,
And thus he might persuade her to accompany——

LEONORA.

I see it all! Yes—yes, my Guiscardetto!—

As thou persuadedst *me* a year ago,
(To which add just three quarters, and seven weeks,
And now three days.)

GUISCARDO (*aside*).

A bold assertion—faith !
Since, by the rood, on her side lay, methinks,
The whole of the persuasion ! Come away,
Most dear Leonora ! Come and learn the news ;
There may, by this time, be fresh tidings gain'd !

LEONORA.

Stay !—Leave me not behind thee !—not so fast !—
Remember I am scarce as brave as thee,
My Hero and Leander !—Oh, my Hector !—
My dear, intrepid chick, I heard some noise !

GUISCARDO.

Run—run ! I die with fear !

LEONORA (*screaming and running*).

And I am dead ! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—A SPLENDID CHAMBER IN THE DUCAL PALACE
IN THE COUNTRY NEAR MANTUA.

ANGIOLINA, (*alone*).

No hope of change—no chance of an escape !
Oh ! what a miserable wretch am I !
Hark ! was't a step ? methought I heard a step !—
How do I start at sounds and fancied sounds,
And almost fear my own half-stifled breathing !

Well may I dread the echo of a step,
When it announces but to me the same —
The most pernicious presence! Oh! despair!
Hippolito—my light of life! my dear one!
This cold despair hath not decreased my love,—
I do not cease to love 'mid all this anguish!—
Nay! better do I love than ever! Yet
That love seems grown a misery and a madness,
As though I suffer'd from *its* sweet infliction —
As I was crush'd to earth with the agony
Of Adoration's uttermost extreme!
(And not with lacerating doubts and terrors)
In truth, I scarce can *bear* the love I feel —
The unutterable submission of devotion —
The incomprehensible idolatries
That snatch my living soul from me away,
And put a burning passion in its place!
Hippolito! I never loved thee *thus*
In joy, and hope, and freedom, and repose!
It is the contrast—'t is the contrast, sure—
Betwixt that high and holiest tenderness
(Which virtue sanction'd and which Heaven approved,
And where already hovering seem'd to tremble—
The shadow of the saintly star of marriage,)
And this foul libertine's abhorr'd advances,
That make my blood to creep—my flesh to curdle,
With utter detestation, and all loathing!—
He comes!—and fear and madness do possess me!

[*Enter* DUKE.

Avaunt! thou fiend!—

DUKE.

Appear, thou loveliest angel!—

Appear unto my ever-longing eyes!

That know but night while thou art yet unvision'd.

Nay! veil not up the triumphs of thy face—

The blushing wonders of thy countenance!

Advance the banners of thy beauty here,

And all for me seems victory—transport—joy!

Throw off that envious veil, I must behold thee!

ANGIOLINA.

Oh! would it were my shroud! Thou heartless man,

How canst thou slay me thus by inches daily,

Still dealing death-blows at my heart and spirit?

How canst thou dare pretend to love—(To love!

It seems an infamy to join *that* name

That bright, and starry, and most precious word,

With aught of thee or thine!)—and yet to torture

With every art of cruelty refined?

DUKE.

Of cruelty? learn——

ANGIOLINA.

Cruelty the worst—

Thus girding me with doubts and madd'ning terrors—

Thus leaving me in desolate suspense,

That grinds—grinds down my withering, writhing heart—

A hideous state!

DUKE.

But speak the assenting word—

But say that thou 'lt be mine, and thou art free,

And all thou lov'st are safe!

ANGIOLINA.

'Tis *there* thou torturest,—

Grief for myself, though poignant 't is and deep,
 Seems nothing to the anguish I endure
 At that cold, iron silence thou still holdest
 Regarding all I pine so much to hear—
 All that I yearn so shudderingly to know!
 Thy lips are marble, and thy looks are ice!
 Hippolito?—my father? Dar'st thou threat me—
 Dar'st thou, with stern, abrupt, disjointed phrases—
 Dar'st thou, i' the face of yon avenging Heaven—
 Threat me—thou ruthless and ill-minded tyrant!—
 With *their* destruction,—if I spurn thy baseness?

DUKE.

More measured terms would better far become thee,
 Whilst thou and they are in my power. (*Aside.*) She
 knows not

Her good old father is in no man's power:
 Gone to his coffin,—not a whit too soon!—
 (*Aloud.*) Now hear me still—hear, haughty Angiolina!

ANGIOLINA (*clasping her hands*).

Nay! thou relent'st! thine alter'd eye is softening!
 How floweth the unfix'd purpose of thy mind?
 What be thy changed thoughts?

DUKE.

Rocks!

ANGIOLINA.

Unriven?

DUKE.

Unriven

ANGIOLINA.

No! tears shall shake what thunder should not shatter!
No! prayers shall thrill what earthquakes ne'er had shiver'd!
No! I will melt thee—win thee—save thee yet!
Aye! save thy soul from th' unaccomplished crime—
Th' uncompass'd—th' uncommitted wrong design'd!
Save—save thy soul alive from the uncrowned trespass!—
I kneel to thy remorse—thy late contrition;
I pray to that contrition—that remorse!

DUKE.

Remorse! contrition! Monks and woman's prate!—
I know them not; they are *words*!—*unreal* the feelings!—
Save where some drivelling, priest-rid dotard dreams!—
Yet hear me, haughtiest Angiolina!—hear!
No more thy lover but thy sovereign now!

ANGIOLINA.

Aught—all things but the *first*, and I will *bless thee*!
Yea!—though my tyrant, torturer, executioner!—

DUKE.

Peace, daring girl! I must be absent now
Some seven good hours——

ANGIOLINA.

For *that* my heart could bless thee!
Say 't is for ever, and 't would almost love thee!—

DUKE.

Enrage me not! 'T were best thou held'st thy peace!
This time I give thee to think o'er again——

ANGIOLINA.

No!—I refuse it—No!—no times could change me!—
Not centuries— not milleniums—the age eternal!

Nought—nought could change me ; I reject thine offer !

DUKE.

Beware !

ANGIOLINA.

No ! I am desperate, and defy thee !

DUKE.

Think !—dread my power !—

ANGIOLINA.

No ! I am arm'd to brave thee !

DUKE.

Cease !—yield !—

ANGIOLINA.

No ! No ! I am inspired, and curse thee !

Man ! I am seconded, and back'd, and aided——

DUKE (*starts*).

By whom ?

ANGIOLINA.

By Heaven, and Hope, and Honour !

DUKE.

Dreamer !

Thou dost deceive thyself ! but 'tis in vain !

Thy Heaven is far ! Hope—Honour cannot save thee,

If thou 'st no other friends and fast allies ——

ANGIOLINA.

Aye ! the true heart of my Hippolito !

DUKE.

The true heart of Hippolito ! But, listen !

Since thou rejectest my offers, wilt not take

That time I did propose to thee for conquering

Thine own blind obstinacy—hear me farther !

If thou wilt pledge me not thy promise now—
 This moment—*now*—to be mine own, I go
 To sign the order which shall place the life
 Of young Colonna in a fearful strait!
 I swear that *he* shall suffer for *thy* sin!

ANGIOLINA.

My *Sin*! thou bad, and bold, and dark blasphemer
 Of innocence and virtue!

DUKE.

I will crush him!—

Will make his forfeit life the sacrifice—

ANGIOLINA.

Thou *darest* not!—

DUKE.

Try!

ANGIOLINA.

Thou wilt not!

DUKE.

Wait!

ANGIOLINA.

Thou shalt not!—

DUKE.

Death!—thwart me!—thwart!—and see!—

ANGIOLINA.

Thou should'st not!—shalt not!—

By Earth and Heaven, thou shalt not! Oh! Colonna!
 My choice!—my cherish'd!—dearer soul and self!
 My Soul—my dearer One!—and Self—my nearer One!
 My Love—mine only One!—would'st thou for *me*
 Not die—not yield all wealth, gifts, treasures, blessings,

Of earth—life!—nay, of immortality?
 All sacrifice—*all sacrifice*—surrendering,
 To save *my* threaten'd peace—*my* threaten'd life!

(DUKE *going*.)

Return!—retract thy words! Grant—grant my prayers!

DUKE.

Thy promise!—quick!

ANGIOLINA.

I promise! No! no! no!

And blister'd be my tongue for such a word!
 Hippolito! *thyself* would scorn my gift,
 Bought at so horrible—accursed a price!
 Such offering of my weak, unworthiest love
 Were worse than all th' invented ills of tyranny—
 The last—worst outrages of crown'd oppression!
 I will not promise thee—I *still* defy thee;
 Do thy dark will as Heaven shall do its bless'd one!—
 Kill!—kill! Aye! stab him, like the hired assassin!
 Strike with such blows as thou *now* deal'st on *me*—
 On all *my* shivering—shuddering *soul* convulsed
 With agonies that should, indeed, be death's!
 (And shall!—the only death of soul—deliverance—
 Translation from this world unto a better!)
 Then, with such wounds upon his mortal frame—
 Then will he suffer little, and not long—
 Freed in a moment from his fleshly fetters!

DUKE.

Thou 'lt change!

ANGIOLINA.

To Clay!—ere I can cease to loathe thee!—

DUKE.

Thou 'lt change !

ANGIOLINA.

To Immortal, and *not* cease to *love him* !

DUKE.

Thou 'lt bow !

ANGIOLINA.

To trample on thy soul with mine !

DUKE.

A moment yet!—but speak the word—the word !

What! silent? Not ev'n tears? Wilt save his life?

ANGIOLINA.

And sign our death of soul?—No! tyrant!—never!

That were indeed our death of soul if sin,

Should yawn betwixt us!—Worse than that *thou* deal'st!

Which slays through suffering, even to *free* at last,

Through very inability to bear it!

No—no! Accursed soul-killer as thou art

Thou shalt not *thus* make *me* one!

DUKE (*takes out parchment*).

Here!—behold!

One word—and he is safe! One word—he dies!

ANGIOLINA.

Hence! Hateful tempter—back!

DUKE (*going to table and taking up a pen*).

If once I sign it,

All earth—all heaven, shall make me not retract it!

One moment more!

ANGIOLINA.

Myself would sign it! Yea—

Myself, ere I would swerve from right and realty!—
 I *was* despair, affliction, anguish, madness!
 The Extremities of such profound despair,
 Affliction, madness, anguish,—these have changed me—
 I *am* submission, firmness, strong decision!
 One only wish remains—to *die* with him!

DUKE (*signing paper*).

'Tis done!—and 't is thy deed. Farewell, proud maiden!
 His blood be on thy head! I go. [Exit DUKE.

ANGIOLINA (*falling on her knees, covering her face*).

Gone!—gone!

Grant Heaven that he is gone! 'T is over now—
 Done—past recall. (*Starts up.*) Yet—yet there gleams a
 hope!

I will not think he *dares* do what he threatens.
 But yet, there sure is hope!—that gentle page,—
 He look'd with such compassionating kindness!—
 And spake sweet words, too, of mysterious import—
 That yet assured me he would serve me staunchly.
 I straight will seek him. He is here!—'t is well.

[Enter HYACINTH.

Ah! aid me, gentle boy!—and save me—spare me!—
 'T is in thy power.

HYACINTH.

Nay, gracious lady! How?

ANGIOLINA.

Bear but a letter for me.

HYACINTH.

'T is against

His Highness's express commands.

ANGIOLINA.

Dear boy !

Oh ! pitiful and tender soul ! strive—strive !

Oh ! find some way to serve my mortal need.

Come—come !—to thy inventions ! Think !—but think !

HYACINTH.

Yes ! I *do* know a way : 't is doubtful—dangerous ;

But I will try it.

ANGIOLINA.

Blessings on thy head !

Blessings fall round thee like the dews of morning !

(She takes a letter from her bosom and gives it.)

Bear this as 't is directed. Haste !—haste !—haste !

HYACINTH.

I go !

ANGIOLINA.

Success go with thee !—Saints preserve thee !

[Exit HYACINTH.]

Now !—my Imelda ! well I know thy brain

Is quick at stratagems and keen devices !—

If such should fail, I have urged her to make public

The dark recital of my cruel wrongs.

My countrymen will rise at once to aid me.

Yes ! I appeal from Tyranny to Them !—

The People ! Yes ! the People shall protect me.

The o'erflowing drop of foul oppression's cup

Baptizeth them as with their own shed blood

Into a nobler nature all at once ;

And makes from slaves, a Sabaoth of avengers—

From thralls, a league of soul-anointed kings ! *[Exit ANG.]*

SCENE III.—A CHAMBER IN THE HOUSE OF IMELDA.

Enter IMELDA with a letter.

IMELDA.

Astonishment! and oh! profoundest anguish!
How do I blush at my remember'd love—
A load of infamy upon my soul!
I loved thee! Prince of Mantua!—loved thee well:
Not for thou wert a prince!—No! my true heart
Loved thee as poor love poor! Oh! artful copyist
Of all the charming aspects of pure virtue!—
But hence with thought, self-communing, and sorrow,
My friend's sad state should sole engross my mind!
Already have I form'd—matured a plan,
Which much I hope may compass her deliverance!
Already sent for one I know will aid me—
The long-devoted Giulio!—for Colonna—
In the Duke's power it seems that *he* is placed—
Though little can I share the racking fears
Of Angiolina, that the Duke will dare
Achieve his ruin if indeed—— He comes—
The noble Giulio! [*Enter GIULIO.*

Lose not, sir! one moment

In saying if, on reading my despatch,
Thou dost consider my planned scheme may be
A feasible and sound one!

GIULIO.

Lady! Yes!

I am perplex'd! Indeed the want of time—
The abruptly-pressing exigence o' the case,
Might well bewilder clearer heads than mine ;
And with my *heart*, too, rack'd and riven——

IMELDA.

At once

'T were best then I assumed this deep disguise :
The youthful page, methinks, resembleth me :
His hair—complexion, of the self-same colour ;
His stature, to an inch mine own ; his features,—
Not much unlike.—I shall not be discover'd !
But say, ere yet I seek mine injured friend,
What tidings hast thou learned of lost Colonna?

GIULIO.

I have much reason to believe he is
A prisoner for the present, strictly made
In his own house, where I have ask'd in vain
To greet him (if, indeed, still there abiding),
I was denied admittance surlily,
Plainly, and peremptorily. Methinks,
All circumstances well considered o'er
'T were best, if truly (as Heaven grant thou may'st!)
Thou thus effectest escape with Angiolina!—
That she, in like disguise of some young page
(If possible the Duke's own livery wearing),
Should gain access unto Colonna's house,

And set him free,—and fly with him till well
This pestilent storm may have blown over.

IMELDA.

Good!

Thyself remain upon the watch to serve us,
Arm'd at all points, and press Emmanuel, too,
Into this holiest service! *She* once safe,
Will I speed back unto this house, to make
Due preparations for her quick reception,
In case she needs such refuge and concealment.
First, she would haply in Colonna's mansion
(Her father dead, as doubtless knows the Duke,)
Be sought for—yet ah! no! it cannot be,
Not steel-faced tyranny dare trench so far
On human holy rights! I pray thee watch;
Do thou and brave Emmanuel (who I feel
Will promptly pledge himself to aid the cause)
Well sentinel the streets, especially
Near to the palace and the princely house
Of that deceiver—that dark-soul'd Durazzo!
I doubt not, *he* hath, helped these horrors all!

GIULIO.

Count upon me as on thine own strong soul!
'T is for her safety—for *her* weal, I work!

[*Exeunt together.*]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—A GRAND SALOON IN THE DUKE'S COUNTRY
PALACE, NEAR MANTUA.

The DUKE and AZZO DURAZZO discovered.

DUKE.

Her perseverance is most strange !

AZZO.

Most strange,

My liege, to those who like ourselves, perchance,
Have slight acquaintance with the ways of virtue !

DUKE (*aside*).

Insolent flouter ! yet must I endure it !

He is just now the soul and master-mover

Of all my schemes ! (*Aloud.*) Ha ! ha ! thou 'rt right, good

Azzo !

Thy sense is keen, good Azzo — troth, thou 'rt right,
Thou bear'st a brain !

AZZO.

A poor one,—at your service !
Now as regards that rank disease called Virtue !

DUKE.

Ha ! ha ! thou 'rt right, good Azzo—ever right !—

AZZO.

It varies in its symptoms very strangely !—
This same meek Virtue—put not from her path,
May be a sociable good soul enough ;
But touch her in her points of honour—plaff !
Off—off she goes like trains but newly-fired !
By all the saints—a girl of gunpowder !

DUKE.

Aye ! such explosions I could bear and *echo*,
But fix'd resistance Rock-like——

AZZO.

Would'st thou know

A scheme I have late devised ?

DUKE.

At once !—speak !—speak !—

AZZO.

Hold ! not so fast !—The forfeited estates
Of Count di Moria—those large sums squeezed out,
By false accusal, from the old Jew Demetrio—
Half Campeodoria's confiscated lands—
The administration of the affairs of Mantua,—
All must be promised me, and promised *safely*,
Writ, sign'd, and seal'd ! What think'st thou, gracious
Duke,
All men must be rewarded, bribed, enrich'd,

Except thy faithfulest and best of servants ?

DUKE (*aside*).

High-souled, disinterested,—infernal miscreant !

(*Aloud.*) Content ! All, all, and guaranteed to thee
Without a chance of failure or of flaw.

I swear to thee—by mine own soul I swear it !—

Now quick,—thy plan !

AZZO.

A forced, pretended marriage !

I—Prince !—will ably personate the priest !—

DUKE.

Most excellent ! I thank thee—ha !—I thank thee !

Tho' forced—when once, poor fool ! she deems and dreams

That sacred knot is tied, she will not *dare*

Resist her lawful lord—her wedded spouse,

No longer mounted on that mettled steed

(Whose caracolling shakes all earth beneath it)

Of rampant Virtue ! She will change her tone,—

Will by degrees forget Hippolito,

For him she shall imagine she is bound

To love, obey, and honour !

AZZO.

Is it good ?

DUKE.

The best ! I thank thee—thank thee.—Who is here ?

[*Enter an ATTENDANT.*

ATTENDANT.

A man from Mantua, may it please your Highness,

Who, driven by urgent business, and despising

Representations and remonstrances,

Insists on instant audience of yourself.

LUIGI (*rushing in and embracing the Duke's knees*).

Most gracious Duke! I come for right—for justice!

Oh! justice—justice—Duke!

DUKE.

Thy wrong?—what is 't?

LUIGI.

A villain, Duke!—a foul, pernicious villain,
Hath stolen my daughter from my hearth away!
Think, mighty Duke!—my daughter—my sole child!
In midst of all her beauteous, blossoming youth,
Her maidenly light-heartedness and joyaunce,
And glowing hopes! She loves him not, great Duke!
I *know* she is detain'd 'gainst her sweet will.
The villain is a man of wealth and power,
And I an humble handicraftsman,—thus
He hoped to silence my complaints—blind wretch!—
All earth and heaven shall hear—shall right my wrongs!
Grace—justice—Duke! afford the father help
To rescue the innocent—the cherish'd darling,—
From such foul grasp of lawless love! Haste—speak—
And give me instant justice—special help,
And spare at once the father and the child!
The impious contemner of the laws—great Duke,
Just Duke!—good Duke!—avenger of the oppress'd!—
Is Count di Sforza—let him feel thy power!
Avenge!—spare!—save!—protect!—give justice!—
justice!—

DUKE (*who has shrunk away during this speech, plucks his robes from the man's hands, and exclaims*)

Away! thou dragg'st me, ruffian!—dragg'st me down,

Into the dust thou 'lt drag me ! Loose thy hold !
 Hence ! I am ill !—Hence, hence, thou dost me harm !
 I cannot comprehend thee ! I am ill—
 Oh, I am very ill—my temples throb—
 A dizziness hath seized me ! I am poison'd !
 A chilliness comes o'er me ! I am murder'd !
 Drag hence the man—I know not what he says—
 How *dared* ye bring the maniac to our presence ?
 He raves !—

LUIGI.

I rave ! aye, *reasoning* I *may* rave—
 I well may rave in reasoning o'er my wrongs !
 Oh ! if thou 'rt ill, great, gracious Prince !—at least
 (Lest thou should'st *die*, as every mortal must,)
 Let thy *last* act an act of justice be !—

DUKE.

Ho ! varlets—villains—whither have ye 'scaped ?—
 Help ! treason—treason !—bear the madman off !
 Grind him till nothing but his gore is left !
 Grind him ! as he hath crushed *me*, to the dust !
 Azzo Durazzo ! quick—thine arm—support me—
 Azzo ! I say—haste !—guide my steps—here—hold me—
 A fever seizes me !—my heart 's on fire !—

[*Exeunt* DUKE and AZZO.

(ATTENDANTS *come and seize* LUIGI.)

LUIGI.

How ! spurn'd—insulted—when for holy *justice*
 I sued—as for a favour, *not* a right !—
 Ha ! what !—for justice—for the eternal justice—

(The which I knelt for as myself had done
Some crime unparallel'd!) this—*this!* what! *this!*
The immense of all injustice!—threats—contempt—
And such wild outbreak of insane suspicion!
Back, menials! Have ye children?—*Had ye parents?*—
[*He is borne away.*

SCENE II.—A WIDE STREET IN MANTUA IN WHICH IS
COLONNA'S HOUSE.

Enter ANGIOLINA and IMELDA disguised as pages.

ANGIOLINA.

Escaped! escaped! the saints be praised for this!
But Oh, my father!—Oh, my poor lost father!
Thy terrible tidings, mine Imelda! chill me.
No! to *that* house I could not bend my steps,
I could not bear the agony of thoughts
That then should rush on my bereaved—wrung soul!
Best—first of fathers! noblest—kindest—truest!

IMELDA.

Nay, sweet! be comforted—have prudence—prudence!
Be silent! we may be perceived, suspected.
There stands Colonna's house, and lo! behold,
Against the balcony seems some one leaning!—

ANGIOLINA (*eagerly*).

Is't him? Oh! I am safe!

IMELDA.

No! 't is not him!

Some menial of the household. Let *me* speak,
Thy quivering voice might fatally betray thee.
Good friend ! a messenger from the honour'd Duke !
His Highness hath commanded the Signor,
If now at home, should *instantly* admit him.

SERVANT.

Thy name ?

IMELDA.

'Tis Hyacinth ! this youth's is Andrea !
He bears despatches for Signor Colonna,
Sent from his royal master !

SERVANT.

Wait one moment !

The doors shall be unbarr'd.

[*Servant leaves the balcony.*]

ANGIOLINA.

And shall I see him ?

Oh ! *are* we safe ? Shall we escape together ?
But oh ! my poor — poor father !

[*Servant opens door.*]

SERVANT.

Enter !

IMELDA.

Go !

[*ANGIOLINA enters the house with the servant.*]

Now may her wits work well, — and work well mine ! —
I am for home to acquaint my worthy guardian
That he may have a gentle guest to-night,
And make swift preparations carefully

For well bestowing her in secret safety,
With unsuspected, prompt accommodation—
Lest there should chance some strait that should require it:
May there be no occasion for 't!—'t were best!
Now let me think: the Duke's own private signet
Hath Angiolina (by my care secured)
Now safe in her possession; thus can they,
If prompt and prudent now in their proceedings,
Pass—aye! Colonna (though detained in durance
He *may* be, by the Duke's unjust commands)
By aid of this same signet shall pass free!
All will be well!—Who is 't approaches softly?
I tremble!—Ha! good Pietro, is it thou?

PIETRO.

Yea, gracious madam! I am bade to haunt
The precincts of this house and give th' alarm,
Should any violence be here attempted
Against the inhabitants from *outward* foes!

IMELDA.

'T is good! Thy master, where remains he,—say?
The Count di Castagnola?—where 's his post?

PIETRO.

Hard by the mansion of the Count Durazzo;
Signor Emmanuel Lorio keeps good watch
Near to the ducal palace, which, thou know'st,
Is not from hence far distant.

IMELDA.

And thine orders?

PIETRO.

Are, lady, to remain the night through here,

And stir not save the house should be attack'd,
Or any scenes of violence take place.

IMELDA.

Mind well thine orders—still be on the alert,
Guard well thy post, good Pietro, be most cautious—
And oh! most vigilant—have hundred eyes,
And thousand ears—and Oh! within thine arm,
If need should be, the unconquerable strength
Of twenty thousand arms, for such the cause,
'T is as a host in its own hallow'd self—
The unvanquishable strength of *right* is in it,
And standing 'gainst th' unrighteous must o'erthrow him,
Though tower'd he legions strong, and mountain-stablish'd!
Be mighty! 't is a strong—bless'd—righteous cause!

PIETRO.

Lady! I yield not till the death, Heaven speeding!—

IMELDA.

Watch not too near the dwelling of Colonna,
(Though within hearing), lest it rouse suspicion!

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE III.—INTERIOR OF COLONNA'S HOUSE.

ANGIOLINA and HIPPOLITO COLONNA.

ANGIOLINA.

Would'st have me wed to-night?—must this be so?
Alas! my father,—yet unburied,—surely!
Oh! must it be? Decide for me, beloved;
I have now *no* protector, love, save thee!

HIPOLITO.

It must be, if, indeed, thou would'st be saved!—

ANGIOLINA.

Yes—yes, it must be!—All a daughter's feelings
To my fair fame, and to our safety now,
And future weal, I thus must sacrifice—
Yet 't is a sacrifice—a painful one—
Most painful! but accustom'd now I am grown
To pain, methinks, and can far better bear it
Than when *at first* it girded me with iron!

HIPOLITO.

Our marriage must be secret, sweet,—most private.

ANGIOLINA.

Aye! decency would have it so—my father!—

HIPOLITO.

I have a friend—a kind, true, worthy friend,
Who will give up, I know, at my request,
His house at once; within it stands a chapel,—
This chapel shall behold us two united
In wedlock's sacred, honourable bands!—
Try, Duke of Mantua!—try thy vaunted power,
When Angiolina is Colonna's bride!

ANGIOLINA (*shuddering*).

Speak not the hated name! I almost fear it,
As 't would invoke a fiend—*that* fiend to rise—
That human fiend before my loathing sight!

HIPOLITO.

Sweet Angiolina! grant thy closest heed
While I detail to thee, in terms exact,
The method of our marriage, and the manner

In which we must elude and foil suspicion.
We must not go together from these doors !

ANGIOLINA.

Not go together ! *Must* I go alone ?

HIPPOLITO.

Indeed, thou must, in stealthy shrinking sort ——

ANGIOLINA.

Ah ! shrinking ?—Yes !—indeed, in every nerve,
From every sound, at every sight—from all
I meet, or hear, or dream—man, woman, child,—
Ev'n from myself !—from *thee* ev'n if I saw thee !
Oh, dearest—dearest ! *must* I go alone ?
Let me not go alone—the terror 's on me !
Oh ! I shall swoon away with sickening dread,
And, waking from that swoon to find myself
Deserted, helpless in the shadowy streets,
Shall die with fears of After and Before,
All struggling in my stricken soul at once !
Hippolito ! I must not go alone ;
My love—my life—I dare not go alone !

HIPPOLITO.

Thou dar'st distract me with this cold refusal—
Thou dar'st distress me with the worst distress—
Thou dar'st deny my wish—defy my will—
Destroy my hope—my heart ! Oh ! thou 'rt courageous !

ANGIOLINA.

Oh, love ! thy words, like poison'd daggers, pierce me.
I dare not disobey thee—never will !—
Yes ! I will go alone !—Proceed !

HIPPOLITO.

Less fear

Be sure there is than if we went together.
Arrived in safety at my kind friend's house,
To which I will most specially direct thee,
(Nay, send a faithful follower there to guide thee,
Who shall await, some two streets off, thy coming,)
Thou must prepare to find me ——

ANGIOLINA.

Ah, Colonna !

That needs but happy preparation !—

HIPPOLITO.

Listen !

ANGIOLINA.

My heart is hearing thee—aye, every word !

HIPPOLITO.

Arrived in safety, then, there entering softly,
Thou must prepare to find me mask'd, disguised.

ANGIOLINA.

Wherefore !—within the house ?

HIPPOLITO.

What ! see'st thou not

The vengeful Duke may by some means discover
Our place of hiding and burst in on us ?
Mask'd and disguised we may escape him still ;
How should he know my friend from me ?

ANGIOLINA.

And I ?—

Must I be mask'd ?

HIPPOLITO.

'T were needless—no !

Retain thy present excellent disguise :

These boy's habiliments themselves perform

The part of mask,—they change thy very features !

The hair, that wont to hang in thick-shower'd tendrils,—

(That gleam'd like cluster'd constellations shining,

I scarce could see its beauty for its brightness—

Scarce mark its softness through its trembling splendour !)

Adown each side of thy sweet, silken cheek—

Push'd back beneath thy cap—exposing thus

Thy smooth, broad brow and all thy heaven of face—

Much alters thee, and marks with strange disguisement,

That changes thee ! The *exposure* plays the part—

And plays it well—of most perplexing mask !

So ever in thy virginal array

Didst thou in shrinking modesty remain,

Half-hidden like a fresh slow-budding rose—

Screen'd 'mid its leaves—a golden cloud of hair

O'ershadowing thy sweet seraph countenance !

A cloud ?—a glory rather, loveliest One !—

A glory of fair glistening hair—all splendour !—

A precious lustre—all a living light—

A dazzling veil, indeed !—sole worthy crown—

For so much beauty, more like heaven's than earth's !—

ANGIOLINA

Look not so keenly on me, loved Colonna !—

There is a restless movement in thine eye—

There is a quivering flutter in thy voice—

There is a hurrying shiver on thy lip—

There is a feverish tremble in thy hand :—
 Oh ! what portend these most unquiet signs ?
 Compose thee, dear Colonna !—I am thine !
 I *will* be thine !—no power shall more divide us !
 Thou look'st—oh Heaven ! I reckon not why !—thou look'st
 As thou wert going yet once more to lose me—
 As thou wert losing me—even *now* ! Not so !
 Thou hast not lost me, dear one !—I am here !
 Thou wilt not lose me ! Shall I not be *there* ?
 Thou 'lt never lose me !—I am at thy heart !—
There—there !—for ever at thy heart ! Our life—
 Our future mingling life is love for ever !
 Ne'er more,—drear Thou and I,—and Thine and Mine,—
 One endlessly united “ We ” and “ Ours ! ”—
 Look not again with such sad scrutiny—
 Such curious-earnest looks into my soul !
 'Tis true, thine image there is shadow'd o'er
 Just now, dear love !—'t is shadow'd o'er, and deeply !—
 But by the memory of a late-lost father !—
 Thou art not jealous, mine adored ! of *that* ;
 Nought else lives housed within but love and *thee* !

HIPPOLITO.

Mine Angiolina !

ANGIOLINA.

Voice of my beloved !—

How dost thou glide into my deepest spirit,
 And make it all a moving melody,
 Till not thyself is more one precious music !
 But tell me, my Colonna—bridegroom—husband !
 How shall I know thee, mask'd and thus disguised ?

HIPPOLITO.

Nay! be but firm—nor conjure up vague terrors!

ANGIOLINA.

A thousand trepidations will assail me;
How many masks will be there in that house?

HIPPOLITO.

But two!—myself and my most faithful friend.
And thou shalt know me by this half-blown rose,
Worn *here*—*without* my heart, as *thou within* it.

ANGIOLINA.

Methinks, I wish that the awful time were come,
And yet I dread it!

HIPPOLITO.

Cheer thee!—have *no* dread!

Soon as the blessed ceremonial 's o'er,
The fleetest steeds shall bear us far away
From enemies and hate to endless love!
I have a friend at Rome that will receive us.
And oh! remember, princes may not dare
To burst the bonds Religion's self hath bless'd!
Power there is weakness,—Pride must there bow down!
The tyrant's self must be a suppliant there!—
More 'specially in Rome's Tiara'd City—
The sacred clime—and country of the Church!
Religion's capital and citadel!—
There we may breathe indeed in happiest freedom,
Safe shall we rest from the inroads of oppression!
Once the solemnity is o'er——

ANGIOLINA.

Oh! say—

Must I not visit ere I go, alas !
(Though sure 't will cause me mortal pangs of grief),
My venerable sire's beloved remains !

HIPPOLITO.

Why would'st thou harrow up thy gentle feelings ?
The good old man is happy—is at peace !
No sufferings, sorrows, shames, temptations, trials,—
No Time—no Crime—no Earth—Death—Buryings—
more !—

Oh ! who would envy not the enfranchised dead ?
At thy return thou may'st beside his grave
Keep solemn vigils !—Did I grant thy prayer,
And let thee look on him to-night, ev'n so
Might all be risk'd again ; that might be cause
Of wondering, doubt, discovery, and detention !
Now, Angiolina, fare thee well awhile !

ANGIOLINA.

Nay ! speak not such a word ! if thou must go,
Pass like a spirit from me suddenly ;
Then shall my soul swoon gently off with thee,
And following thee by sweet unconscious instinct,
Not know thou 'rt gone till time to meet again !
But that terrific word—that dark “ Farewell,”—
Frowns—starts like the executioner to the heart,
And bids it to *prepare* for death and doom !
Say not “ Farewell !” for when we hear *that word*,
Absence in all its anguish doth o'erwhelm us !
Already low we're plunged into its depths—
Its fathomless abysses of all gloom !
Far doth “ Farewell ” our souls in suffering speed—
(Anticipating all an age of absence !)

Down the precipitous bleak paths of parting—
Still doth Farewell—a fiat of destruction—
Teach the pain'd soul the *whole* despair of parting,
Ere yet the fond and faithful ones *are* parted !
The *whole* despair ! aye, true, the unmeasured whole
Beginning and Continuation lingering—
And *not* the *end* of parting ! Oh, my love !
May *that* for us be an eternal meeting !
Ten thousand blessings !—*we shall meet again !*

HIPPOLITO.

Yes, Angiolina ! we shall meet again !

ANGIOLINA.

Think how *my* heart must pine for that dear hour,
Since I have no protector now but *thee* ;
An orphan, newly made to, and bereft
Of one—the tenderest and most fond of fathers !
No mother have I, sisters, brothers,—none !
My father's friends are of the world before me,
Another generation !—quickly gather'd
Must they be, like my father, to their graves !
But thou, Colonna, thou wilt be mine all—
Spouse, parents, guardian, tutor, friends, and kin,
Ev'n like a Providence on earth to bless me !
For one so signally bereaven, seems
To claim the especial care of gracious Heaven,
That can and shall raise up in *one* dear heart
A host of loves, such as surround and shield
The better-fortuned children of the earth,
In many bosoms beating—and *divided*—
For *them*—in *ONE* concentrated and gather'd !

•

HIPPOLITO.

Nay, speak not thus! I cannot bear it—no!
 Away! away!—

ANGIOLINA.

Again thy voice is flutter'd—
 Again thy lip is shivering like a leaf—
 Thine eye glares changefully—thy hand is trembling—
 Thy cheek,—a flame-bright fever spot is there,
 Blood-red and burning! Oh! thou 'rt ill—thou 'rt ill!
 Nay, go not forth! a blight is in thy veins!
 No! that hot flush is fading swift away!
 Thy countenance is calmer—look at me—
 Oh! look at me, my love! thy deep—deep eye
 Is fixing now into tranquillity!
 It glistens! ah! it glistens! What! a tear?
 (HIPPOLITO *weeps.*)

Weep not, or thou wilt overwhelm my heart in tears—
 Aye, thou wilt drown it in thy tears for ever!
 Why weep'st thou? Sacred powers! why weep'st thou?—
 speak!

HIPPOLITO.

Why, what should over-joy that *scarce can speak*—
 What should it do but weep for want of words?
 Ne'er, ne'er before my free-wing'd thoughts have thus
 Joyed—high-fantastically!—passionate-glorying—
 With zeal, whose strong excess *shames* eloquence!
 Hence! let me hence, for there is much to do—
 Nor is there time for tears, nor words, nor silence—
 One kiss! no! *not* upon thy stainless brow!
 I tell thee, no! upon thy hand! (*He takes her hand.*)

Soft hand !

I could not crush thee in my stronger grasp !
I could not have the heart to crush thee, no !
And some can crush the soul—the trusting soul !

ANGIOLINA.

No soul yet ever trusted as doth mine—
Mine at this moment ! Oh ! 't is all thine own !
I do repose such confidence in *thee*,
As babes in mothers—martyrs in their creeds !—

HIPPOLITO.

No more ! peace—peace ! remember—oh, remember !

ANGIOLINA.

Nay, fear not me ! Think'st thou I am but *half true* ?

[Exit HIPPOLITO.]

How the last echo of his steps seems precious ?
'T is past ! and now my heart hath sunk indeed ;
Inquietudes seem gathering round at once—
In absence' deepening and oppressive gloom,
Forth starting as the superstitious dream
Dark spirits start at midnight from the graves !
And I must go alone—disguised—at night—
With fear of that stern man before mine eyes—
The tyrannous, deadly-hating Duke, for so
I deem of his destroying, blighting passion ;
'T is hatred to mine honour and my soul !
Hippolito, I will obey thee still—
Obey thee—to the letter will obey thee !
And may my guerdon be *thy* happiness !
For mine—'t is pale within my father's shroud,
And long 't will be ere it can smile again !

My very hope is silent as a sorrow,
And weeps without a tear—but yet it weeps!
And this pale-stricken joy, this death-touch'd hope,
To thy bless'd memory—Oh! my sainted father—
Perchance proves tenderer tribute—and yet deeper—
Than many a Grief might be without these adjuncts—
Than many a Sorrow that is Sorrow only!

[*Exit ANGIOLINA.*

SCENE IV. AND LAST.—A ROOM IN DURAZZO'S HOUSE,
COMMUNICATING WITH A SMALL CHAPEL, THE DOORS
OF WHICH ARE OPEN.

*Enter ANGIOLINA, then the DUKE, and HIPPOLITO, masked,
and AZZO DURAZZO habited as a Priest.*

DURAZZO.

My daughter, sign the contract. Here!

ANGIOLINA.

Aye, Father!

But pause a moment yet—my sight is dim—
My heart aches heavily! Thou, holy man,
Know I stand here afflicted with a loss—
No less a loss than a most tender parent;
One that at this grave hour should be beside me,
To aid, sustain, encourage, soothe, and bless me;
The Funeral calls me and I seek the Espousals!
I am an orphan!—Priest, forgive my sorrow!

AZZO.

Forgive it!—nay, I honour that and thee;

It is a seemly sorrow, and most blessed,

(One of the masks shews signs of impatience.)

But, daughter, be consoled—thy lover waits,

And pants to prove thy best protector now !

Quick ! sign thy name, and at the holy altar

Receive his vows of tenderness and truth.

(She takes the pen.)

ANGIOLINA.

My soul swerves from me—knock my knees together—

Mine every nerve's unstrung—mine every pore

Turns to a chill of iciness !—I shiver

As might a dying wretch beneath a blow, —

Another wound unto his death-wounds added !—

And now I feel in statue-stillness bound.

I am a frost !—no ! no ! there comes a thaw ;

Sweet tears ! ye melt me to myself again !—

Give me the pen once more, O Father !

(She takes the pen, and signs.)

DUKE *(exclaims aloud suddenly).*

Done !

'T is done ! —

ANGIOLINA.

My love ! spok'st thou ? No ! 't was not thou !—

Hippolito ! art there ? That voice, I knew it—

It scared my senses from me with its sound—

It struck me down as with a stabbing stroke !

Hippolito !—all silent ?—nay ! one word !—

Is 't life or death ?—a silence of the grave !—

Speak to me—some one speak—in mercy speak !

Speak to me—speak to me !—the silence answers !

Oh, ruin—ruin! Hope is dead—alas!—
 New horrors open to devour me now,—
 Yawn—to devour their living, life-cursed prey——

(Goes to the priest with her hands joined.)

Oh! holy Father, hear a wretched orphan!
 My plighted, promised husband is not here!
 Some treacherous art hath kept him from my side,
 Black as the arts of those that tempt our souls:
 To thee then, Father, I must trembling turn!—
 Deserted by all earth—betray'd—destroy'd—
 Now must I turn to thee—and Heaven!—Oh, hear me!
 For *That* will hear me!—be not deaf. Hear! Father!—
 Protect me from these dark—these dangerous men!
 Oh! by the altar, at whose sacred foot
 I was about to kneel (the thought is madness!)—
 By Death, and Resurrection, and the Judgment,
 I pray thee, grant me now some safe asylum—
 Some solemn sanctuary—or I must turn
 From *thee* still—*still* to Heaven—and to the tomb!

AZZO.

Peace! daughter! nay, thou'rt dreaming—'tis thy husband!
 Already, by that contract signed, ye are wedded!

ANGIOLINA.

'Tis false!—I am not wedded!—will not wed!
 I dream! I do believe I dream! but 'tis
 A dream of terrible and ghastly horrors—
 A dream of maddening mysteries—hideous things!

(Looks earnestly at the Priest.)

Art thou, indeed, the priest?—I doubt—I doubt!—

(Shrieks.)

Oh! powers eternal! know I not that face?—
 A face I feel that I have shrunk from—swoon'd from—
 With deadly sickening of profound aversion!
 Azzo Durazzo!—Now I know thee, wretch!
 Fate—phrenzy—torture—whither shall I turn?
 No more escape—no help at hand—no mercy!—
 A world of wickedness—and form'd to whelm me.
 Caught, snared, betray'd, and fallen and lost for ever!
 Ye have kill'd Hippolito!—ye have waylaid him!
 Pierced—Heaven knows how—into our inmost counsels,
 By some black artifice! Sweet Virgin! save me—
 Save my beloved Hippolito and me!
 Speak! have ye slain him?—Speak! that word may kill me!
 Oh! speak then, quickly!—be that sound a sword
 Plunged in my heart in one deep, desperate minute,
 To spare me ages of all agonies!
 Have ye—oh! have ye slain him?

DUKE.

No!—he lives!

ANGIOLINA.

Then he will save me! Tremble—tremble, traitors!

DUKE.

He will not save thee!—and thou'rt mine—mine own!
 Thou'st sign'd the contract, and thou'rt made *my* bride!

ANGIOLINA.

Thy bride!—the grave's bride sooner! Ye have slain him!

DUKE.

He lives! I tell thee!

ANGIOLINA (*mournfully*).

No! it cannot be!

Or he would surely be beside me here! (*Energetically.*)
Here—to defend me!—Here!—to tear me from thee—
Here, 'gainst the united universe to stand—
If, that the united universe abused me!

DUKE.

Listen! He doth resign thee, and to me!

ANGIOLINA.

Stand from my sight, thou groundling groveller!—Off!
Avoid thee!—back—give back!—Hence!—stay me not!
Out of my path, thou reptile! and obey me!—
Out of my path, I say! Ho! let me pass!

DUKE.

A thousand phrenzies fire thee!—nay, remain!
Lady! thou stirr'st not from this spot!

ANGIOLINA.

Give back—

Give back, thou dastard tyrant of a woman—
Oppressor of the fallen and fatherless!
Fallen!—nay, not so!—I am above thy soul!
Where bides Hippolito—my lord—my husband?
Say! if he lives—where—where remains he now?

DUKE.

Would'st know, indeed?—I tell thee he resigns thee!

ANGIOLINA.

And I tell *thee* I scorn thy savage words—
Still marvelling that great Heaven should strike thee not—
Aye! with the lie upon thy false lips—dead!

DUKE.

The lie! Wilt thou believe, thou raging woman?—

Wilt thou believe *himself*, if he shall tell thee
That he resigns thee ?

ANGIOLINA.

Aye ! 't will be in *death* !

Yet he shall not resign me ! No !—Oh, no !
Not thus, even *thus* shall he resign me—never !
For I will creep into his frozen bosom—
And be the bride of his sepulchral chamber !
Where art thou ?—where—my heart's Colonna ?

(DUKE and HIPPOLITO *unmask*.)

HIPPOLITO.

Here !

(ANGIOLINA *darts forward to him and falls at his feet*.)

ANGIOLINA.

Oh ! pardon me !—Oh ! joy—a dream !—Colonna !
A dream of miserable, strange dismay !
Thou thought'st to play with my too dubious heart !—
What means it all ?—'t is mystery !—Answer—answer—
Thou husband of my heart,—what means it ?

(HIPPOLITO *takes her hand, and attempts to give it
to the DUKE*.)

HIPPOLITO.

This !

ANGIOLINA.

Is 't life ?—is 't death ?—I perish—now I perish !
There was a world—there is a chaos now !
My soul is dead—before me !—it is gone !
And I am vacancy—my soul hath perish'd !—
I am annihilation ! Nothing is—

Time, earth, *all* perishes—all Nature dies!
The worlds are wither'd, and the space is sunless.
Speak! dreadful shadow of my virtuous lord—
Speak! horrid thing, resembling his dear mould—
My heart aches deathfully! Yet—answer!—say,
What arts infernal——

HIPPOLITO.

Angiolina, hear!

I have resign'd my claim unto thy hand;
I yield thee to the Duke, our Liege and Sov'reign!—
Do thou obey me—yield thyself to him.
Deny me not!

ANGIOLINA.

Deny thyself, and die!

Pass from me darkly—hence! Be air—be nothing!
Deny thyself, and *shew* thou 'rt but a shadow.
Hence, monster'd mockery of a human shape—
Creation of the fear-distemper'd fancy!—

HIPPOLITO.

It boots not thus to look with the eye of phrenzy——

ANGIOLINA.

How dar'st thou meet my looks, and *die not*, villain!
If—if, indeed, the Horror hath a life!
Thy monstrous, nameless, strange, impossible falsehood—
Makes night a blazing sun beside its blackness!
But what seems horrible beyond all else—
What strikes me to the dust with shame and misery!—
So that I pass by *Thee* to greet new Evil,
So that I leave the worst to find a worse—

Is, that my soul is blacken'd with *thy* soul ;
 My heart hath answer'd to *thine* impious heart !
 I am contaminated !—I am corruption !
 My thoughts have been infected with thy thoughts—
 My feelings fester'd with thy feelings' contact !—
 Oh ! must my spirit go with *thy* lost spirit ?
 No ! thou unutterable traitor !—no !
 That soul shall speed from earth and thee at once—
 For all earth now seems infamy and thee !

[*Draws a dagger from her vest, and is about to stab herself. HIPPOLITO snatches it from her, and flings it out of the window. She flies to the opened window, and screams.*]

ANGIOLINA.

Help !—mercy ! help !—Help ! murder !

DUKE.

Gag her straight !

Heavens ! we shall have all Mantua at the doors.
 Drag her away !—Conceal her !—Quick !—Steps—steps !
 Make fast the doors !

ANGIOLINA.

Help !—mercy !—Help !—oh !—help !
 (*A loud knocking is heard.*)

DUKE.

Who knocks ?—Who comes at this unseemly hour ?

Voices outside.

Unbar the door, or we will force our way !

ANGIOLINA (*struggling*).

Haste !—haste !—Oh !—help !—Oh !—succour me !—Oh
 save me !—

(*The door is burst open, enter GIULIO, EMMANUEL,
and PIETRO.*)

GIULIO.

Ah! *thou* here, Duke? Well, well, may'st thou cower back!
Doth conscience wake then at the approach of vengeance?
Amazement on amazement! *Thou*, Colonna!—
Thou, here!—and yet this wrong'd, afflicted maid,
All agonising with affright's worst panic,
Even to the fever'd flush of phrenzy's height!—
Thou here, her sworn protector!—and thy bride—
Thine own affianced one—*not* safe and shelter'd,
As underneath the mother bird's own wing?—
Or *thou* gash'd grimly with a world of wounds—
Each wide enough to let out fifty lives!—
Thy limbs hack'd into million quivering pieces!—
What means this uttermost of mystery? Speak!—
Could thy right arm not shield her—~~save~~—preserve her?
Speak!—speak! was Strength not strengthen'd in such
cause?

ANGIOLINA.

My tongue shall tell, if I live through the telling,
Though ev'ry word its separate wound must give—
Down with thy high soul to the dust—the dust!—
Thou, noble Giulio!—would'st thou understand
What I have utter'd, and have yet to utter?
Oh! Christ!—the ruin of my peace were nought—
A slight offence—that should be pardon'd quickly,
Forgiven, and yet forgiven o'er—o'er again,
But thus conspiring for my fair fame's ruin—

Thus entering in the abhorr'd league 'gainst mine honour!—
Oh! when I think of this supreme of treachery!—
That foul, false priest—that violated altar!—
Save!—Giulio, save me from myself and madness!

GIULIO.

Thou'rt safe! Oh! be not thus disturb'd—distress'd!
Panting and flutter'd like the frighten'd dove!
Nay, peace!—thou art safe! recall thine own sweet spirit!
For thou seem'st hovering o'er creation's confines,
Suspended in some Life-and-Death-like trance.

ANGIOLINA.

Giulio! behold that foulest of earth's traitors!
Behold! I say, and blush that thou art human!
Behold! and be ashamed that thou art a man!
Behold that miracle of desperate falsehood—
One who would sell the soul that worshipp'd him
To everlasting ruin and despair!

GIULIO.

Perdition! but thou art fallen beneath my sword!
Thy blood should make it a dishonour'd weapon!
Stand forth, false Duke! I challenge *thee* to combat!
Stand forth, thou liar! traitor! slave! Have at thee!

DUKE.

Rebel and caitiff! dar'st thou challenge *me*?
Be proud that thus I deign to measure swords
With such an earthworm as thyself!

(*They fight, GIULIO disarms the DUKE.*)

GIULIO.

Yield! yield!

Submit thyself, false Duke! and wholly yield
All title to this hapless, injured lady!

DUKE.

I yield, Count Giulio! I resign the maiden:
Suffer me seek my palace unexposed.

GIULIO.

Begone! deliver us from *such* a presence!—

[*Exit* DUKE.]

Durazzo garb'd in garments of the Church!
Thou foul, irreverend infamy! Get thee hence!
Follow the master-fiend! Avaunt—avaunt!

DURAZZO.

Think'st thou that Power shall punish not for this?
Look to thyself!—proud rebel 'gainst thy Prince!

[*Exit* DURAZZO.]

IMELDA (*rushes in*).

Safe—safe! My friend—my Angiolina safe!
Hippolito! thou here? What means this?—speak!
Methought I heard there was deception, treachery—
Methought thy cries had call'd deliverers round thee!
My gentle Friend!—methought thou wert in danger!

ANGIOLINA.

Oh! ask it not—it is the deadliest horror!

IMELDA.

I guess it—yes! methinks I read his soul—
'T is stamp'd upon his low'ring guilty brow.

HIPPOLITO.

Nay, haughty lady! who made thee my judge?

IMELDA.

Thou hast yet a severer one within—

Thy loudly-crying conscience!—Angiolina,
Stand not thus statue-like in trance of thought!
Thank thy preservers—Giulio and Emmanuel!

ANGIOLINA.

Signor Emmanuel! here receive my thanks,
The warmest, deepest thanks that ere were given!
With mingling sobs, sighs, tears, and words, and tremours!
Thou hast deliver'd me from deadlier dangers
Than those the storm-worn mariner must dread
When strikes his ruin'd vessel on the rock:
Accept my thanks, prayers, blessings,—heart-poured wishes
For thy true happiness—Here and Hereafter!—

EMMANUEL.

Sweet lady! 't is a blessing to have served thee!

GIULIO (*aside*).

And not one word for me! Ah, cruel—cruel!
But I will hence, and rid thee of my sight!

ANGIOLINA.

Giulio! art going? yet awhile delay,
Giulio di Castagnola! I do owe thee
Far more than I can pay: yet, if indeed
Thou still remainest in the unmoved self-same mind,
Thou own'dst when *last* we held discourse together,
And this poor hand be precious fee for thee,—
I *may* give largesse for thy Life-dear service—
'T is thine! wilt take it?

GIULIO (*taking her hand and falling on his knees before
her*).

I am lost in joy!

Will I? my *Soul* receives the infinite treasure,
And kneels to thee as *I* am kneeling now,
And blesses thee as fain my tongue would bless thee,
But seem my lips forgetting speech!— *they* murmur
Too faintly what my heart would cry aloud!—
Oh, Angiolina, I am lost in love!

ANGIOLINA.

My heart is labouring with a sorrow, Giulio!—
That thou wilt suffer it to cherish yet,
Wilt thou not let me mourn a little while?
My father, Giulio! (*she weeps*) My dear father, Giulio!
Thou know'st I have one but in Heaven. I pray
Grant me a little while to weep!

GIULIO.

My heart
Weeps blood to mingle with thy tears' deep treasure!

IMELDA.

Emmanuel, I will make this sweet example
Of my heart's sister—gentlest Angiolina—
If so thou will'st it, pattern for myself,
And give thee for thine own this hand of mine,
Repudiating with scorn and utter loathing
The memory of my weak and ill-placed love!
Wilt thou receive this grateful, soften'd heart—
The heart that once could beat for Mantua's tyrant?

EMMANUEL.

Rapture! methinks I am caught above the clouds!
Eternal light seems breaking on my sense!
Is 't the same earth an hour ago I trod?
My life is blessedness!—my soul is *thee*!

IMELDA (*to HIPPOLITO*).

Treble lost villain! didst thou—couldst thou, then,
Beneath thy roof and at the altar's foot,
Plot 'gainst the hapless victim who adored thee?

HIPPOLITO.

Aye! I was tempted past my powers to bear;
And (while a willing prisoner in my house,
Through arts accurs'd assisting this foul scheme,)
Ev'n in the Sacredness of Solitude,
Dared sell my soul piecemeal!—from Guilt to Guilt
Press'd on, as now from Anguish driv'n to Anguish!
[He rushes out.]

GIULIO.

'T is well he is gone! his presence was a pain!
The Wretch groaned death-struck on his bosom'd rack!—
The Wicked ev'n how oft do vindicate
The Eternal's ways and works to wond'ring man!

THE END.

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